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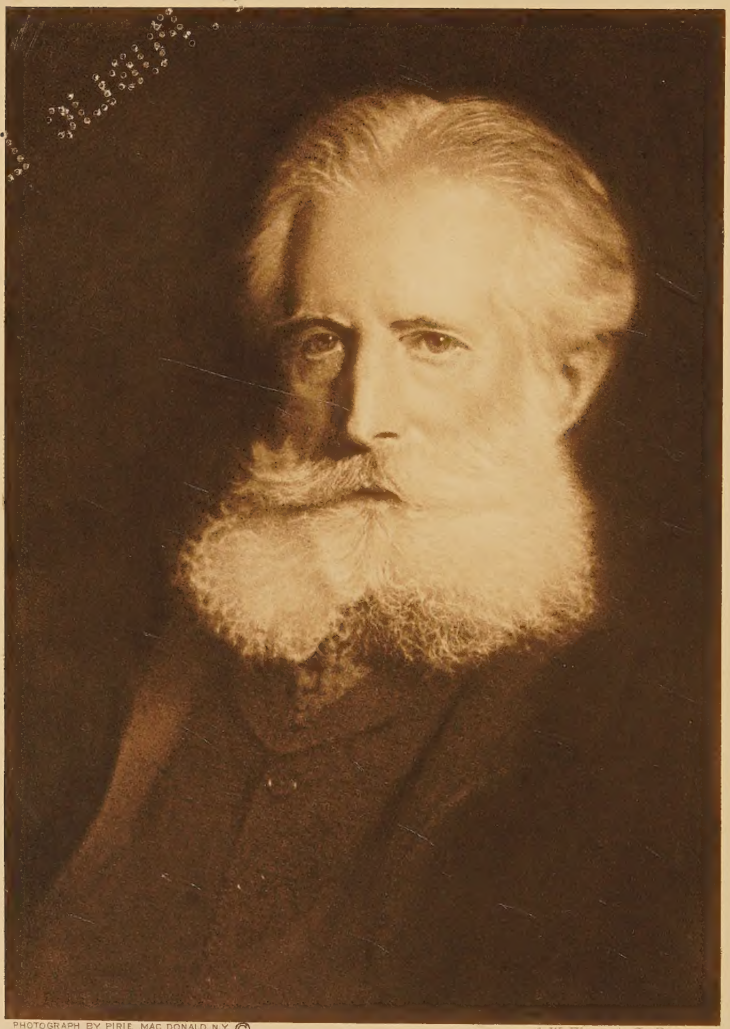

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Edmund Clarence Stedman

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

BY

LAURA STEDMAN
AND
GEORGE M. GOULD, M.D.

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME TWO

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

CHAPTER XX

VICTORIAN POETS

In a copy of "Victorian Poets" belonging to a friend, Mr. Stedman, by request, in 1903, wrote these words: "This book grew out of a study of R. H. Stoddard's 'Late English Poets'—a review of which I contributed, at Mr. Lowell's request, to the *North American Review*, in 1865 or '66. Five years later I made the study of 'Tennyson and Theocritus' (see Chap. VI) which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. The interest excited by it led me to write the other essays, mostly for *Scribner's Monthly*, which I afterward revised and collected in 'Victorian Poets.' The *prefix 'Victorian' had not previously become familiar.*"

"It is not a hand-book," he told a correspondent; "I wrote it to tell my ideas of poetry. It was ever my wish to express my opinions in this way, if I became independent. I wrote passages of the 'Victorian Poets' at College."

Some years later, sending his enlarged "Victorian Poets," and its companion volume "Poets of America," to Professor Woodberry, we find this letter:

I would like to have you read the *Prefaces*—there are *two* in the English volume. Also, I would have you bear in mind that the "Victorian Poets" was a *pioneer* attempt, in these parts, to set forth the canons of the poetic art as I conceived them, and to do so by a kind of "demonstrative anatomy." Furthermore, understand that each book is made up of ten or a dozen *distinct mono-*

graphs on the leading subject, personages, and that the chapters on the "general choirs" here and abroad were added chiefly because it occurred to me that in this wise the books could be made *also* works of record and reference, and therefore stand more chance of being preserved and read for a longer time than criticism usually endures.

The earliest essay was the Landor, and hence its rather stilted opening. It was prentice-work, but I still stand by the *ideas* in it. The Bryant essay was written between Bryant's death and burial, for the *Post*. That, too, begins too toploftily. But I have not changed my views of poetry and art and the poetic life; and indeed I started with them in youth, and so you will not find much *inconsistency*—I trust.

Well, as you purpose, I look to see you go on and own the future, and go as far beyond my point as the telegraph beyond the semaphore. But you will have to reckon with first causes and primeval forces all the same, *ad sæcula*.

When completing the original edition of "Victorian Poets," in 1875, Mr. Stedman wrote to Moncure D. Conway:

For a year or two past I have been contributing to *Scribner's* and the *Atlantic*, as independent articles, chapters from a work of some pretentions, now under contract to be brought out next Fall by my publishers. It is entitled "Victorian Poets," and designed to cover the whole ground of *British* poetry during forty years—1835–1875. I will not bore you with a package of the notices which these papers (such as I forward herewith) have received from the leading press. But I trust you will not misinterpret my reason for saying that I have, from first to last, been encouraged and considerably surprised by the prompt, unstinted, and persistent, welcome given to them by both the public and our own guild. Several publishing houses, I may add, have made offers for the book, learning that it was in hand and not knowing that it was already pledged to my always kind and liberal Boston friends. Besides letters from many American authors I have heard from several prominent English poets, etc., and have been strongly advised to have the book printed in London simultaneously with its appearance in the United States.

If this were only a series of critical articles, I should not suppose

it would meet with an English sale. But I believe it is the first attempt thus far to survey the whole course of recent British poetry, from the *rise* of Tennyson, down to the latest aspirants, upon a consistent method—with analysis of the period, etc., etc., including careful study into both the works and the lives of the leading poets. Taine, you remember, only includes Tennyson in his latter-day studies. English books on the subject have chiefly been compiled by barristers, college-professors, and other *laymen*. The first sentence of my opening chapter, (written, for your convenience, upon the enclosed Summary of Contents), sets forth the scope and design of the work. It is written from the artistic point of view by one who has experience, if nothing else, in the study and practice of English verse. . . .

I expected to be in England next March and to attend to this matter myself, but circumstances will not permit, and it is necessary to confide it to other hands. I am able to think of no man of letters whom I should so willingly ask to undertake it, as yourself, and when your name was mentioned to Mr. Osgood, he approved of my suggestion in the warmest terms.

I should feel honored and thoroughly satisfied by any introduction you might write. There would be no need of more than a morning's labor, nor should I expect you to assume the slightest responsibility for my critical views. Possibly the *raison d'être* of an English edition—and the leading points of its preface—might be: 1. That no work has been issued of a similar scope; in addition to its critical character, it practically forms a *manual* of recent poetry; 2. That as the work of a foreigner it is without prejudice; 3. That it may serve as a portion of the reflex current of thought now setting from this country toward England; 4. That it is in a certain sense, professional—not amateur—criticism. But all such matters will readily suggest themselves to your own perfect taste and judgment, in case of your favorable action upon receipt of this request.

American authors have learned that no attention is paid to an American book in England, unless it bears an English imprint, or already has had a run at home. I suppose, judging from the sale of my other volumes and the present outlook, that the success of this one, here, is measurably assured; and I don't wish to see a pirated and unedited edition brought out at some future time, abroad.

Mr. Conway did not write the Introduction,—as his letter explains:

Chatto & Windus think, and I am inclined to agree with them, that your book will not require my Introduction, or you either. Your name is better known in England than you appear to think. I can commend the book to my literary friends and will do so, and hope for a good success. I consider the publishers good. . . .

If you have any very strong feeling about the Introduction no doubt Chatto & Windus would accede and I will write it; but it appears to me better to assume that you are sufficiently recognized as an authority and critic without it.

In the Preface to the first edition, dated 1875, the author says:

Although presented as a book of literary and biographical criticism, it also may be termed an historical review of the course of British poetry during the present reign,—if not a minute at least a compact and logical, survey of the authors and works that mainly demand attention. Having made a study of the poets who rank as leaders of the recent British choir, a sense of proportion induced me to enlarge the result, and to use it as the basis of a guide-book to the metrical literature of the time and country in which those poets have flourished. It seemed to me that, by including a sketch of minor groups and schools, and giving a connection to the whole, I might offer a work that would have practical value for uses of record and reference, in addition to whatever qualities, as an essay in philosophical criticism, it should be found to possess.

"The end of my two years job," he notes at the time of writing the foregoing words. "It has been done in spare hours, and has caused me so much overwork, trouble, loss of money and health, that I shan't again venture on a prose work. I am not rich enough for that."

In Chapter I of the volume, further detail of its plan is stated:

As we trace the course of British poetry,—from a point somewhat earlier than the beginning of the present reign, down to the

close of the third quarter of our century,—we observe that at the outset of this period the sentiment of the Byronic school had degenerated into sentimentalism, while for its passion there had been substituted the calm of reverie and introspective thought. Two kinds of verse were marked by growing excellence. The first was that of an art-school, taking its models from old English poetry and from the delicate classicism of Landor and Keats; the second was of a didactic, yet elevated nature, and had the imaginative strain of Wordsworth for its loftiest exemplar. We see these two combining in that idyllic method, which upon the whole, has distinguished the recent time, and has maintained an atmosphere unfavorable to the revival of high passion and dramatic power. Nevertheless, and lastly, we observe that a new dramatic and lyric school has arisen under this adverse influence and brought its methods into vogue, obtaining the favor of a new generation, and therewith rounding to completion the poetic cycle which I have undertaken to review.

The evolution of the art-school, partly from classicism, partly from a renewal of early and natural English feeling, may be illustrated by a study of the life and relics of Landor: first, because Landor, while an intellectual poet, was among the most perfect of those who have excelled in the expression of objective beauty; again, because, although contemporary with Keats, his career was prolonged into the second half of our era, and thus was a portion of its origin, progress, and maturity. Throughout this time, as in other eras, various phases of metrical art have been displayed by authors who have maintained their independence of the dominant mode. Mrs. Browning wins our attention, as the first of woman-poets, endowed with the rarest order of that subjective faculty which is the special attribute of feminine genius. Hood, Arnold, and Procter may be selected as prominent representatives of the several kinds of feeling and rhythmical utterance that are noticeable in their verse. Elsewhere, as we look around, we soon begin to discover the influence of the eminent founder and master of the composite school. The method of Tennyson may be termed composite or idyllic: the former, as a process that embraces every variety of rhythm and technical effect; the latter, as essentially descriptive, and resorting to external portraiture instead of to those means by which characters are made unconsciously to depict themselves. Otherwise, it is suggestive rather than plain-

spoken, and greatly relies upon surrounding accessories for the fuller conveyance of its subtle thought. After some comparison of the laureate with the father of Greek idyllic verse,—pointing out, meanwhile, the significant likeness between the Alexandrian and Victorian eras,—I shall give attention to a number of those minor poets, from whose diverse yet blended rays we can most readily derive a general estimate of the time and its poetic tendency. These may be partially assorted in groups depending upon specific feeling or style; but doubtless many single lights will be found scattered between such constellations, and each shining with his separate lustre and position. Finally, in recounting the growth of the new dramatic and romantic schools, under the leadership of Browning and Rossetti, we shall find their characteristics united in the verse of Swinburne,—in some respects the most notable of the poets who now, in the prime of their creative faculties, strive to maintain the historic beauty and eminence of England's song.

The influence of science upon poets and poetry is thus touched upon:

Poetry will not be able to fully avail herself of the aid of Science, until her votaries shall cease to be dazed by the possession of a new sense. Our horizon is now so extended that a thousand novel and sublime objects confuse us: we still have to become wonted to their aspects, proportions, distances, and relations to one another. We are placed suddenly, as it were, in a foreign world, whose spiritual significance is but dimly understood. At last a clearer vision and riper faith will come to us, and with them a fresh inspiration, expressing itself in new symbols, new imagery and beauty, suggested by the fuller truth. Awaiting this, it is our present office to see in what manner the quality of the intervening period has been impressed upon the living pages of its written song.

The present, a period of transition, suggested to Mr. Stedman this thought:

For that the years of transition are near an end, and that, in England and America, a creative poetic literature, adapted to the new order of thought and the new aspirations of humanity, will

speedily grow into form, I believe to be evident wherever our common tongue is the language of imaginative expression. The idyllic philosophy in which Wordsworth took refuge from the cant and melodrama of his predecessors has fulfilled its immediate mission; the art which was born with Keats, and found its perfect work in Tennyson, already seems faultily faultless and over-refined. A craving for more dramatic, spontaneous utterance is prevalent with the new generation. There is an instinct that to interpret the hearts and souls of men and women is the poet's highest function; a disposition to throw aside precedents,—to study life, dialect, and feeling, as our painters study landscape, out of doors and at first hand. Considered as the floating land-drift of a new possession, even careless and faulty work after this method is eagerly received; although in England, so surfeited of the past and filled with vague desire, the faculty to discriminate between the richer and poorer fabric seems blunted and sensational; experimental novelties are set above the most admirable compositions in a manner already familiar; just as an uncouth carving or piece of foreign lacquer-work is more prized than an exquisite specimen of domestic art, because it is strange and breathes some unknown, spicy fragrance of a new-found clime. The transition period, doubtless, will be prolonged by the ceaseless progress of the scientific revolution, occupying men's imaginations and constantly readjusting the basis of language and illustration. Erelong some new Lucretius may come to interpret the nature of things, confirming many of the ancient prophecies, and substituting for the wonder of the remainder the still more wondrous testimony of the lens, the laboratory, and the millennial rocks. The old men of the Jewish captivity wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundations of the new temple, because its glory in their eyes, in comparison with that builded by Solomon, was as nothing; but the prophet assured them that the Desire of all nations should come, and that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former. But I do not endeavor to anticipate the future of English song. It may be lowlier or loftier than now, but certainly it will show a change, and my faith in the reality of progress is broad enough to include the field of poetic art.

The original edition, 1875, is made up of 441 pages. The chapter titles are:

I. The Period.
II. Walter Savage Landor.
III. Thomas Hood.—Matthew Arnold.—Bryan Waller Procter.
IV. Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
V. Alfred Tennyson.
VI. Tennyson and Theocritus.
VII. The General Choir.
VIII. The Subject Continued.
IX. Robert Browning.
X. Latter-Day Singers:
Robert Buchanan.—Dante Gabriel Rossetti.—William Morris.
XI. Latter-Day Singers:
Algernon Charles Swinburne.
Index.

Dr. George Ripley, to whom Stedman had dedicated the volume as a sincere acknowledgment of the debt due him from American authors for his prolonged life of service to them, at once reviewed "Victorian Poets" in the New York *Tribune* of October 26, 1875. "Fifteen years ago," said Stedman, "I would have given an arm for such a tribute from such a source." Some passages from this review are:

In the composition of this volume, Mr. Stedman has presented a beautiful illustration of the unity that is sometimes, though rarely, found between the possession of high poetical gifts, and of the faculty of acute, and even, subtle criticism. The example of Addison and Pope may be brought as a proof of such combination, but in each of those illustrious men the critical power so far dominated over the exercise of imagination, as to give the supreme place to judgment rather than to poetry. In more recent times, Wordsworth and Coleridge have shown a mastership in the critical function, rivaling the splendor of their poetry by the sinewy prose of the one, and the airy philosophy of the other, while in our own country, Bryant and Dana are no less honored as sovereign judges in the realms of literature, than revered as creators in the world of fancy. Mr. Stedman now affirms his claim to the possession of each title. Among the younger American poets, he has long been

the subject of select and peculiar honors. The freedom and fervor of his verse have made him a cherished favorite with the lovers of natural feeling and spontaneous expression. His teachings have been imbibed from the lessons of Nature, and not from the schools of tradition, rejoicing in the flow of song, instead of courting the unwilling Muse. But in the present volume, he challenges a new position in American culture, postponing the creative power to the utterance of critical judgments, and evincing a maturity of taste, a richness of learning, and a refinement of analysis, the lack of which might well be excused to the possessor of such genial gifts of poetic inspiration.

Mr. Stedman's purpose has been to furnish a critical and historical review of British poetry during the reign of the present Queen. Before proceeding to the main object of his work, he offers some pregnant remarks on the characteristics of the present age, especially in relation to the conflict between science and religion, which has a significant bearing on the condition of poetry. The period, he observes, has been marked by a stress of scientific iconoclasm. This stress has been vaguely felt by the poets, but it has never been distinctly stated. The movement is not one to be lamented, for it cannot but lead to new and fairer manifestations of the spirit of poesy. There is no inherent antagonism between the cultivation of poetry and the progress of science. Still there is a temporary struggle, which, to some extent, has embarrassed the poets of the age. . . .

As an introduction to the history of English poetry in the present age, it forms a library in itself. No one can study its earnest pages without enlarging his impressions of the dignity of the poetic art, and the mystery and power of poetic inspiration. The manner of the work is as delightful as its matter is instructive. It is profoundly critical, but with no taint of the pedantry of criticism. Its wise suggestions are graciously tempered with the most fragrant aromas of literature, imparting lessons of good taste and sound judgment with no approach to a didactic air. The book is elaborate, but not labored; that is, while it is thorough and often exhaustive in its estimates, it exhibits no signs of effort, and seems to flow with spontaneous ease from the fullness of the author's mind. Every page bears evidence, not only of an active intellect and rare culture, but of sincere and faithful work. In this respect, it furnishes a noble contrast to the affectation and superficiality of much of the

literary discussion of the present day. It is altogether free from the love of paradox, the passion for surprises, and the desire to give the appearance of originality to used-up conceptions. Few productions of American literature evince such ripe æsthetic cultivation, so wide a range of poetical study, or such true refinement of taste and thought. Its publication marks a new step in our intellectual progress, and is a just cause for national pride.

In his *Recollections* his friend Stoddard says:

I have mentioned one mistaken notion that many people entertain, namely, that a man cannot be a poet and a man of business; but I have not mentioned another, namely, that a poet cannot be a critic. If poets are not the best critics of poetry, musicians are not the best critics of music, architects of architecture, and painters of painting. The idea is absurd!

Stedman's *Victorian Poets*—published in 1875—is the most important contribution ever made by an American writer to the critical literature of the English poets.

The following excerpts from private letters illustrate how other writers felt concerning the book:

The tone and calmness of the criticism pleased me greatly, and there were some admirable discriminations of a profound and subtle character that I marked for use. Other things too, in the analysis of impressions that seemed to rob me of property in my own meditations, which nevertheless you know pleases the thoughtful immensely. . . .

I like "the artist" in you, Stedman. I mean the form and framework of your style—it is good workmanship. It has always seemed to me a deficiency in our literature that art and letters were too separate and distinct—the professions—I mean. The influence of one upon the other and the value of this is recognized fully among the French. But with us there is little or nothing of this perceptible. But I must not bore you—your own work set me thinking about these things. [*Professor Weir of Yale.*]

Beyond your excellent style of writing—beyond much else that is admirable in your really wonderful book, I admired the *catholic spirit* which made such a work possible. A narrow soul would

have come to the end much sooner, and with a much more meagre result. [*John G. Saxe.*]

I have been reading your book with great enjoyment; its carefulness, thoroughness, delicacy of criticism and fine expression make it a kind of work very rare among us; far beyond that of Whipple for instance, which is apt to have a note of commonplace. It is a marvel even to a man so habitually industrious as myself, that you have been able to accomplish it amid the drawbacks of ill-health and pre-occupation. [*T. W. Higginson.*]

The book is to me a wonder of profound sagacious thought, in a field where there are no footsteps to follow. I think his fame will rest on this work in the future, for only the future can realize the depth and the acumen of his views. As a piece of philosophical criticism, I know nothing equal to it since Coleridge's *Literania Biographia.* [*Abba G. Woolson.*]

I passed an hour this morning with dear old Longfellow who spoke in exalted praise of your lovely book which he said was the most agreeable reading he had made this year. I referred to your delicate, appreciative and dissective analysis of the genesis of Tennyson's performance and said the charm of your book lay in its soundness and truth. Quoth Longfellow, "I don't look for soundness or truth. I read with satisfaction a book that pleases me. If a startling doctrine occurs at variance with my notions, I do not stop to argue with the author, but say to myself 'perhaps I am wrong and he is right' and I pursue his thought without internal antagonism—after which I generally resume my own views."

"But," added he, "Stedman's English is so charming and well-balanced—there is a nicety about his adjustment of words to ideas that I feel as if I had taken into me savory and digestible food." [*Samuel Ward.*]

I am delighted with your *enthusiasm* over the poets of whom you speak. It is pleasant to know that a man still lives in whom enthusiasm over things not "material" is not dead. [*Professor Northrup of Yale.*]

I knew your excellence as a poet, but for the singular ability displayed in the line of criticism I was not I confess so well pre-

pared. I rejoice very sincerely in the large measure of praise the work has already received, and I am much mistaken if it is not destined to take a permanent place in English literature. Everywhere there is discernible the impress of a master hand. The style is charming, but there is something more than felicity of diction. I should hardly know where to look for a finer example of certainty, clearness, depth and subtlety of insight; keenness of critical analysis; propriety and precision of statement; candor and courage in the expression of opinions serenely positive in the calm exercise of a judgment too assured and confident to doubt, too fearless and independent not to dare to express itself, making its decisions in the high court of our critical chancery, authority with all people for all time, because of their evident fairness and discriminating soundness; and righteous truth; where nothing is extenuated or aught set down in malice. It is a book to lie on one's study table for frequent reference and reperusal. [*Abraham Coles.*]

I am glad that you have undertaken, and with so much success executed a critique of the "Victorian Poets." We were greatly in want of such a work; and I will do all I can to introduce it to the notice of my students and others either as a text book or a book of reference. [*C. M. Mairne of Columbia.*]

I received through your kindness a copy of your "Victorian Poets," which I at once turned over to our two professors of English Literature and Rhetoric. Before they returned it I saw by the papers that you had gone to the tropics. When they did return it they said all sorts of good things about it and promised me to send their opinions to Mr. Osgood.

As for myself I read it with the keenest pleasure. It seems to me the best thing in the way of extended literary criticism yet produced on our side of the water—certainly as good, too, as anything I have read either by Julian Schmidt or Brander. Considered as contemporary criticism it is really marvelously acute and discriminating. I am glad to see that the English journals confirm my own idea of it.

Professor Corson has, I think, commended it to his classes. Assuredly a careful study of it would be of great value to students in any institution, both for the matter it contains and as a study of prose style. [*Professor Fiske of Cornell.*]

Everybody says it is, by all odds the best piece of work you have yet done, and I say so too. Minor poets, like all other sorts of minors, are liable to be forgotten. You have done most excellent service in enshrining a good many of them. Your book is a fresh illustration of the saying that we are better critics of English poetry than the English themselves. And *vice versa*, no doubt; for England has done the handsome things for our Longfellow. [*R. D. Hitchcock.*]

From what I already know of it, and of Mr. Stedman's critical ability and æsthetic appreciation, I am persuaded that it will avail much toward awakening in our young men a new interest in the study of contemporary English Poetry, and I shall take much pleasure in recommending it to them. There is no regular text-book used here, in connection with my courses of Lectures on English Literature. [*Professor Corson of Cornell.*]

There are few books of literary worth that did not receive from the official critics and reviewers nearly every possible sort of praise and dispraise. Of Stedman's "Victorian Poets" there was perhaps an overdue measure of unjust criticism, but there was a large surplusage of the just kind. The (London) *Academy*, for instance, said:

The general style of the book is clear and earnest. At times it rises into eloquence. The power of presenting a view with epigrammatic felicity, or by a touch at once brief and luminous, is not absent though it is seldom displayed. The book is on the whole generous and enlightened, and bears the stamp of unfailing honesty. We may not invariably accept Mr. Stedman as a guide; we can always welcome him as an interesting and suggestive companion. He has not approached his task in a light spirit, nor without the preparation of due pains and culture. Decidedly, "Victorian Poets" might have fallen into worse hands.

And the *Spectator:*

Mr. Stedman is an American, and his position as a foreigner gives him, perhaps, in some respects, an advantage over British critics in his estimate of Victorian poetry. He has undertaken a

wide subject, and has treated it with great ability and competent knowledge. When we differ from his judgment, we are forced to respect it; and we may add that his volume, although one of pure criticism, is likely to attract all readers who regard poetry as something better than an "idle trade." It is impossible to follow step by step a writer whose theme is so extensive, and who undertakes to discuss the merits of one hundred and fifty poets who belong to the last forty years of our literary history. . . .

It is fitting that a volume of criticism which opens with the name of Walter Savage Landor should close with that of Mr. Swinburne, who, with Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Rossetti, and Mr. Morris, holds a place among the "Latter-day Singers." On these poets, Mr. Stedman's criticism is marked by soundness of judgment and careful discrimination; indeed, the whole volume will be found judicious and sympathetic. Mr. Stedman has treated a subject of great interest, in a manner which is as attractive to the reader as it is just to the poets whom he has undertaken to criticise.

The friendship of Stedman with Dobson and Gosse now began:

To Austin Dobson.

November 29, 1875.

I owe you many thanks for making me acquainted with a poet so genuine and delightful as Edmund Gosse. What a pity that I did not know him in time to do justice to his poetry in my volume—which appeared here and in England within a fortnight after my reception of your latest letter and Gosse's book. His wine, however, needs no bush from this side of the ocean, but I have written to him in self-justification, or atonement, expressing my great regret that his genius and poetry are not recognized in the *Victorian Poets*.

This and a few other omissions and errors will compel me to revise or enlarge some future edition.

We have enjoyed Lord Houghton's visit to us, and have tried to make the kind old man, with his young heart, enjoy it also. But I fear he goes home with the fixed belief that Americans pass their whole time in breakfasting, dining, supping, and making speeches at one another! Between ourselves, such a round comprises most of his Cis-Atlantic experience!

To Edmund W. Gosse.

November 29, 1875.

Our common friend, Mr. Dobson—that sweetest modern Horace—has been so thoughtful as to send me a copy of your poems, *On Viol and Flute*, and thus has caused me to feel a great amount of pleasure, and no slight regret: pleasure in the acquaintance which I make with a genuine and most artistic poet, and regret that I had not formed that acquaintance in time to do both you and my volume justice by including a notice of your poetry in the *Victorian Poets*. The truth is that I did not conceive the idea of adding, to the longer essays in that book, my chapters upon the miscellaneous and younger singers, until within a few months of its publication—and nothing but a good general knowledge of this branch of my subject enabled me to attempt it in the time and space given me. Unfortunately your exquisite volume was not within my reach. I think no other of equal importance is omitted from my survey.

But it is not too late for me to say how much I am charmed with both the execution and the promise of your poetry. While thoroughly charged with the richness of melody and color that distinguish what I call the Neo-Romantic School, I find more restraint and strength of repose in your verse than in that of many of your comrades, and I am sure—both by the work itself and by instinct—that you can do anything which you attempt in the future. I not only observe the finish of your sonnets and strictly romantic studies, but the natural and modern *feeling* of such poems as "Sunshine before Sunrise" and "Lying in the Grass." Your Pre-Raphaelite friends too often, with all their delicious quality, forget that there is a live world around us, and that great things may be found or happen even now.

But I am writing at too great length, my object being merely to make an explanation (which is your *due*) of the absence of your name from a recent book. I discovered Dobson for myself, and wrote of him as I did, before hearing directly from him. How bright, how healthy, how tender and sweet! And I now am under a new obligation to him for giving me the chance to read you.

From Edmund W. Gosse.

December 21, 1875.

I am inexpressibly obliged to you for your charming and most genial letter. I will confess to you that knowing your book to be

one of quite exceptional completeness and insight, I looked through it eagerly for my own name, and was most properly reproved for my unpardonable vanity. Had the volume not been of such obvious value, and its judgments sure to carry so much weight, I should have cared little. As it was, I was depressed and disheartened more than I care to acknowledge now that I hold your most handsome recognition. I owe much to our good Austin Dobson for bringing my book under your notice.

It is of great importance to us in England to be observed with affection by that huge and ever-increasing public to which you have so graciously and so ably introduced our poets. To myself the hope of recognition in America has always seemed one of the highest objects of ambition. My belief in the future of your nation is unbounded, and I feel convinced that its millions of hardy brains and bodies, so difficult to move in the ways of literature and art, when once moved will progress with irresistible force. To such an end your brilliant volume must actively tend.

I have desired my publishers to forward to you a new volume of mine which is just leaving the press. I need not say how anxious I shall be to hear if it wins your approval.

To Edmund W. Gosse.

March 19, 1876.

Your very kind and graceful letter, dated near Xmas-time, was here to welcome me upon my return from the Spanish Main—eight weeks ago. Your tragedy of "King Erik," so tastefully brought out, did not reach me till some time afterwards. Having your letter, and both of your books, I now begin to feel well acquainted with you—as if, in truth, I knew the man and the poet. I have read your tragedy with an interest heightened by this knowledge, and connected with my own expressed notions concerning the revival of dramatic verse. You have written a very noble poem, marked by the intense love of beauty and art-feeling which distinguish the most recent poets, but strengthened by a simplicity and dramatic virility which are the true "belongings" of tragedy—and which are wanting or suppressed, in much of the cleverest and most elaborate modern poetry. Your verse seems to rely upon *itself* for support, and not upon undue effects of rhythm, color, etc. "King Erik" is full of noble passages, but is specially fine *as a whole*, as a great effort should be—to my thinking. It is

not beside me at present, for I have handed it to Mr. Gilder, the poet, sub-editor of *Scribner's*, who has promised to speedily write concerning it in that Magazine. For myself, I am not connected with any journal at present, and am still so much of an invalid that I am forbidden even to write letters. But in one way and another I hope to see that you are appreciated "over here."

It must be delicious to be so young as you are, and to have such hopes and possibilities before one—the art-world "all before you where to choose." When I was a boy I was brimful of poetry, but from my 20th to my 30th year was so borne down with the labor of making one shilling do the work of two, that I failed to gain any portion of that (the most fruitful) period of life for my best-loved work. And again the same

> "—eternal want of pence
> which vexes public men,"

is so vexing me at this particular moment that I have to postpone my most cherished literary projects. I am glad to see that you are more fortunate, and am sure that you will make a name in English song. Remember me to Mr. Dobson, when you meet him. . . . I am indebted to the *Academy* and the *Saturday Review*, and now to the *Spectator*, for much more careful attention than is usually awarded in England to an American book.

To the Same.

June 12, 1876

I have too long delayed my reply to your altogether hearty and winning letter of April 3d (—poets, after all, I find to be the men who *have* hearts) but have delayed for the best of purposes. My intention was to send you the June number of *Scribner's*, with the review of your "King Erik," etc., promised for that issue by the writer to whom Mr. Gilder, at my request, consigned your drama. That review, however, has been deferred a month, owing to my own officiousness in your behalf. The fact is that, with the intention of enabling the critic to say something of your former writings, your poetic progress, etc., I also handed in your "On Viol and Flute." The reviewer, instead of referring to the early poems, in a notice of "King Erik," wrote a separate notice of the former and handed it in. This will be used, but in the same number with

a review of "King Erik"—which, I am told, is now ready. As soon as these notices appear I shall forward them to you.

Certainly a poet, who at your age has produced two such books, and proved both his lyrical and dramatic gifts (for your tragedy is indeed a noble drama, full of true fire and beauty), has no reason ever to feel depressed. I have observed the reception given to your new book, and the general verdict upon it, and congratulate you with all my heart. You seem to *me* young enough, for I am 42 (*eheu fugaces!*) and have been handicapped with all sorts of vexations during half the creative period of a poet's life. You, indeed, have the world all before you, "where to choose," and my instinct makes generous predictions for your career. A man who is doing just the work that he most enjoys, and whose bent is in sympathy with the rising school, is doubly fortunate. All the trouble in life arises from a man's being out of his special niche—or, as Mr. Lincoln used to say, in his homely fashion, from a "round peg's getting into a square hole." What I said about pecuniary trouble meant just this. . . .

Till my thirtieth year I was wholly occupied in keeping the wolf from my poor-and-proud door, and half-crazy because I had no time nor extra-strength for writing poetry and prose. Was a journalist, earning my bread from week to week. I then vowed I *would* learn how more stupid men made a living, burned my ships behind me, and went into Wall Street. From that time I *have* had some means, and a portion of every year for literature, and in fact, have made all my little reputation here as a poet and critic *since* I left Bohemia and a strictly literary life. But a year or two since I broke down again in health, with a consequent recurrence of "want of pence." It is rather hard, you know, to serve God and Mammon at once. Just now I am busy, with returning health, as a stock-broker, in recruiting my means, and furious because my brain will no longer serve me on 'Change by day and in my study at night. My head is brimful of "Gold" and "Erie"—my heart, of the Ethereal Muse.

You are fond of out-door life? So am I. I have kept myself poor, for years, because I *would* have my Summers for trouting and hunting, but have also kept up my youth and courage in this way. I know the forests, lakes, and streams, of my magnificent native land, from Maine to Florida; and should you ever come here I will introduce you to the delights of fly-fishing and camping in

native woodlands—*unpreserved*. N. B. There's nothing like an aboriginal stream.

With great diffidence I send you, through Scribner, Welford & Co., (London) my collective edition of poems. For I have as yet done nothing which I wish or have vowed to do—they are the things I have stolen a chance to do—although many of my lyrics have been widely welcomed and found a home among my countrymen here. The book, ranging over years, is quite uneven. *Pray skip the opening poem altogether*. It was a boyish, local satire, and is only reprinted because it is so irrevocably afloat as a part of popular American verse that my publishers would not permit me to omit it from this "popular edition." Of course I am ashamed of it: it was a mere *jeu d'esprit* that appeared in a satirical paper, upon a local theme. In like manner treat mercifully most of the Early Poems. I have ventured to mark in the "Contents," a few which you may just glance at—nothing more. The truth is that I am not willing to be judged by these poems in England, and may yet make up a small volume for Chatto. Should I have a photograph taken soon, I'll remember to send you one; meantime the poor wood-cut in the book will do for the nonce. But do send me one of yourself, for my private "illustrated" edition of the *Victorian Poets*. Your own confidences have beguiled me into all this foolish babble about myself. Forgive it. One should "recruit his friendships" as the years advance. . . .

From J. Leicester Warren.

April 21, 1876.

Tho' personally unknown, I take the liberty of writing to thank you for the great honour you have done me by including my name among your list of *Victorian Poets*. I can hardly express to you the interest and pleasure with which I have perused your admirable and exhaustive treatise. Tho' not much of a poet I am an indefatigable student of the poetry of the period you treat of and I have a tolerably complete collection thereof. I also much frequent secondhand bookshops so that if you want any special and rare volume I should be glad to try and procure it for you. Might I ask if you have ever seen *Tonica* a thin 12mo anonymous volume published by Smith & Elder in 1858. The author is I believe one Mr. Johnson, and it certainly contains neo-classical pieces of the highest interest. The book is now very rare. The works of an-

other writer are very difficult to get, viz: T. L. Beddoes. I place him exceedingly high tho' I know parties are divided on this point. He fails so signally in constructive power that one is apt to overlook the matchless force and subtle physical descriptive power of his detached passages. Do you know that Browning published *Pauline* anonymously before *Paracelsus?* The poem has no great merit, but to a book collector it is interesting. It has been a most charming experience to me to read this subject treated—as you have treated it—with the freshness and fairness of a stranger mind. All English criticism is more or less tinged by unconscious partisanship and cliquedom. So that when a thoroughly competent and at the same time quite impartial survey is written from a distance, it comes upon one like myself, who has studied your subject more or less all my life, with the force of a new and delightful experience. I have ventured to subjoin herewith by book post another attempt of my own called the *Soldier Of Fortune.* As a drama proper it is much too long, but I wish it merely to be judged as a story thrown into dialogue form, with no idea of scenic fitness.

To ——— ———

December 26, 1876.

I have read your note carefully, and take no offense, but recognize the duty of an editor to supervise his pages, and to keep in view his own standard of right and wrong.

But have you really read the article? And if so, how is it possible that you do not observe the point upon which I lay most stress, viz. that since Swinburne's early and objectionable lyrics were collected in a volume, nine years ago, he has not printed a single line, a single word, a single thought, so far as I can discover, which can give offense to the nicest and most delicate mind. On the contrary he has devoted himself to humane causes and the purest dramatic art, and all England admires his mature productions.

Even the heroes of your own stories go through a youthful period of temptation and error. His erotic verse is mentioned as the result of his early French studies, and the ferment of an imagination so vivid that it amounted to disease. "Bothwell" however, is the greatest of recent poetical works, and Swinburne's countrymen have long ceased to talk about the "Poems and Ballads."

The man at all events is doing grandly now. I do not defend the absurd and grotesque portion of his juvenile verse (and I try to explain how it came to exist) but I *have* to include it in the poet's literary history.

Honestly, Doctor, have you read Swinburne's poetry, of the last ten years? Do you know much about it, since the "Poems and Ballads"? My quiet opinion is that Swinburne's youthful stuff has never done any greater harm than to set rhymsters imitating the alliterative verse. It is gross, but not seductive like *Don Juan*, etc. My paper is not enthusiastic except in regard to Swinburne's metrical and dramatic genius, and therein I do not suspect myself of "differing from my neighbors."

That I myself have no sympathy with any moral taint in art, may be claimed, I think, from the whole course of my own poetry and prose.

To Austin Dobson.

May 22, 1878.

I believe that I have written since your last letter, but certainly not since my reception of the exquisitely bound second edition of your "Proverbs in Porcelain"—for which my heartiest thanks. My own copy, of the first edition, I have given to a friend who purposes to write something about it. Meantime, a good excuse for my present note is the chance to send you an article that has just appeared in *Appleton's Monthly Magazine*. Here it is. The author is a promising young critic, Mr. J. Brander Matthews. Possibly he has forwarded to you the magazine, but a duplicate of the article will be of use. Let me add that I am much pleased with the haste made by our writers to set you before the American public. Your lyrics, rondeaux, etc., are constantly copied by our "Sunday" and other newspapers and I even have seen them "parodied"—a sure mark of reputation—in our comic sheets. Well, *me judice*, you deserve it all, and more. But be sure and don't, in the long run, neglect the soul, the imagination, of poetry, in the charming introduction and revival of novel forms. There is no danger of this, in your case; but a host of the new *imitators* will and do. Should you see our friend, Mr. Gosse, pray tell him that my delay in acknowledging his dainty parlor-play, with its prefatory essay, has been owing to my hope that I might yet cross the *Atlantic* this season, and thank him face to face. Severe losses, however,

have again broken up my most cherished plans. Every Philistine can travel, and I must not only stay at home, but drudge at everything except my proper work—and am becoming old before my time; yes, old and gray! His play and essay will be reviewed in *Scribner's* next month.

Have just written Mr. Edmond About, *regretting* that I cannot accept the position of delegate to *Le Congrès littéraire International.*

To Edmund Gosse.

May 5, 1879.

Your beautiful and in every way remarkable volume has been a great treat to me, during a relapse which compelled me to stay at home and behave myself. I thus had time to read it at leisure, and have been thoroughly charmed by it—besides learning so much that I never knew before of the field which you've here *made your own.* No one but a poet could have written it: the prose style is perfect—the clear vehicle of your thought—and clear and beautiful thought, in fact, *makes its own co-adequate style.* And the translations are exquisite. Some of the papers I saw as they first appeared—but had not understood how rich and valuable a book the collection would make.

I hope that you, my friend, with your youth and equipment, may be able to do what I have so often been prevented from doing—that you may go on, without long breaks and hindrances, in your literary plans, and make secure the place you are winning. If you can write your History of Icelandic literature, it will be a fine achievement. For myself, of late I've only been able to lay out the plans of works which, thus written in my head, the hand has no leisure nor strength to complete.

However, my fortunes have mended lately, though the fight has turned my hair prematurely gray and almost broken me down.

I *hope*, ere long, to visit England at last, for a short time. Not to bother you, or anyone else—I wish to keep very quiet, and regain my health, and see the green fields and historic places which every Yankee except myself has seen. Yet my mother and sisters lived abroad for twenty years!—in Italy, where my stepfather was United States Minister, and elsewhere. I "married a wife and could not go."

Possibly now, I may induce Chatto, or some one, to bring out a

collection of my poems—expressly selected and arranged "for the English market"—what a phrase!

Am trying to close up my affairs and unable to do any writing. Taylor's death has brought much grief and labor upon me, though I've declined to write his biography. However, I have made a serious onslaught upon *Scribner's* in relation to a *proper* review of your important work, as you will see by the enclosed slips from Johnson, the office-editor. The "Studies" are attracting attention here, and many newspaper "literary items," such as these, are going the rounds. Pray give my love to Dobson, and believe me, with many thanks,—

May 12, 1879, Stedman wrote to his friend Lawrence Hutton:

After several years of unavoidable drudgery, it seems probable that I may at last be able to get the vacation which I very much need. I *hope* to pass a couple of months in England. As I want to see *things* rather than persons, and to be very quiet, I don't know that I shall use any letters of introduction, but it may be well not to be without them. The only *business* I shall undertake in London will be, possibly, to forward my literary interests. If you have in your mind any friend whom you think I ought to know and feel like giving me a line, I shall kindly remember the service. It happens that, although my kindred lived in Europe so many years, my first trip thither is yet to be taken—and I feel as odd as a very old bachelor who at last is to be married!

Mr. Hutton, and other friends, quickly responded with many letters of introduction to eminent Londoners: none of these did Stedman present, for he found a warm welcome awaiting him in the country he had long wished to visit. He sailed with his wife, June 5, 1879, on the *Adriatic* bound for Liverpool. Twenty-three years later, he wrote: "There is no sensation like that of an American's *first* footfall upon England's soil. I have still, somewhere, the grass and pebbles I picked up the moment I took my first step from the quay at Queenstown."

And, in 1887,—"How much you will enjoy and profit

by your trip! And your instinct is right about England and Scotland—always with a bit of Wales. There is no *green* in all the world like that of the British trees and lawns and ivy: how it rests and cools the fevered American eye and spirit. For a while it is like being a child, resting on a mother's breast. I will tell you what, after Warwickshire, satisfied me most in England: Conway Castle (easily reached from Chester) whither I have been twice to pass hours upon its turf-crested battlements, with one of Froissart's walled towns mapped out beneath me; Fountain's Abbey (Ripon) and its surroundings; thirdly, and how different! the Sunday morning service at the Foundling Hospital in London—do not miss it on any account. These are all out-of-the-way things, and so I mention them. Durham is the most picturesque of the Cathedral towns. Peterborough Cathedral is all peace and beauty. And you will see Oxford, and York, and the Lake Country, and Edinburgh! It will be a *vita nuova* for you, whether your life now is sweet or sad. . . . I bid you God-speed, and promise you—if all goes fairly well—everything this Summer which can most subtly charm a person of your taste, and sympathy, and poetic sensibility."

In August, 1879, when Stedman was leaving England for a few weeks in France, his friend Austin Dobson sent these lines:

> "*Sis licet felix, ubicunque mavis,*
> *Et memor nostri . . . vivas.*"

Good-bye! Kind breezes waft you o'er
Serenely to the *Gallic* shore!
Pray Heaven your lyre take no mischance
In that too-tuneful land of *France*,—
Especially 'twere well to care
If there be "poisonous honey" there;—
But truce to jest. Be sure, although
Your bark to *Gaul* or *Gades* go,
There are in this old Isle a few
Who wish all good to Song—and You.

And Stedman's retort was:

Horatius,

From your side the Channel,
Where Britons say their prayers in flannel,
To Paris—where the Gauls still sin in
The lightest silks and whitest linen—
Your Chanson comes, to me a bringer
Of welcome things, blithe brother-singer!—
Of friendship leal, and rhymes, which rather
Than gold who wouldn't choose to gather?
Now had I, like that rare old Greek,
(Whose phrase from memory I speak),
A swift *erasmia Peleia*
To come and go at my desire,
I'd give him all that he could carry
Of thanks, and bid him fly—nor tarry
Until he passed them through your lattice
And heard your hearty shout, *jam satis!*
Perhaps in this new age, 'twere properer
Not from the *Avenue de l'opéra*,
(Where lights electric, silver-shining,
Cocottes and *petits-garçons* dining,
Make up a picture meretricious
But quite Arabian and delicious,)
The P. O., via Calais-Dover,
Should bear this warm God-Bless-You over!

In September from King's Arms Inn, Ayr, Scotland, he wrote to R. H. Stoddard:

Dear old Boy: 'Tis out of the American season here, and rough cold weather besides, so that there is not a beastly Yankee tourist in the "land o' Burns"—this west-coast country—save ourselves; for the which we are duly thankful. We have taken a run North, through the locks, etc.,—and are now to pass through the Cumberland region, before our last ten days in London and return home. This evening I went down to the old Inn, still in perfect keeping, where Tam O' Shanter and Souter Johnnie used to have their meets (and drinks),—was left alone in the second-

story tap-room, sat in Tam's chair "Stirrup-Cup," and drank some Scotch whiskey out of Tam's own cup. Being alone, and thinking of Burns and of you, and wishing R. H. S. were with me, I was daft enough to drink to his memory and your health—most heartily hoping that the latter may be as good as the former, though 'twere idle to wish that it may last as long.

Afterwards, under a dark scurrying sky, I found one of the "twa' brigs" o' Ayr, leaned over the parapet and looked at the other one but got no voice from it, nor heard any sound but the roaring of the swollen river. This P. M. we drove out to the ruin of Alloway Kirk, and stopped also at the cottage where R. B. was born; and to-morrow we shall look at the Mossgiel Farm in Mauchline. Afterwards to Keswick, Rydal Mount, and Windemere. We were at Abbotsford 'tother day. On Sunday, in Edinboro', I stumbled upon De Quincey's plain tomb-stone, in the "west churchyard." It seems odd that I should be pilgrimaging and feebly trying to blow up a little flame of sentiment from the embers of my lost youth. Things always come too late. Then the *Herald*, or the Devil, (likely both), is sending the most fearful weather conceivable to these rain-blighted shores—and if we see the sun once in three days we are surprised and satisfied. . . .

We have been well-treated here, and after being in France, it seemed like coming home to get back to Britain—of which we have purposely seen all we could—but we've seen nothing to make us regret we are Americans (except the afore-cited "tourists"). I find your work, and some of mine, better known here than I supposed—and do hope that your projected collective edition will soon be out both here and at home. Have seen something of Dr. Westland Marston,—a very kind, sensible, warm-hearted man, of whom I have heard you speak.

By the way, I have been racking my brains to think what I could bring you of curious or rare, but have seen nothing that would be worth while, or new to you and me. And as for utilities, *nothing* in Europe is so *good* and *cheap* as in America, except clothes, lace, silks, gloves,—and these 'tis too much trouble to smuggle. So as 'tis about the moving time with you twain, and you know your own wants and are old enough to do your own shopping, I am going to make you twain my present in advance—which you will find enclosed—$25. for *R. H. S.* and $25. with my love to *E. D. B. S.*—as I learn from Fred. that the office has really paid

expenses during our absence, and am much pleased thereat. Pray accept this, in lieu of the gew-gaws which travellers bring home to bother their friends withal, and which we have foresworn. And some good may it do you. I saw Huntington in Paris, *grown* young, younger than either of us! He gave me the first edition of Keats' *Endymion*. . . . I see Harte's and Twain's books *everywhere*—occasionally Aldrich's.

Mr. and Mrs. Stedman returned to America early in October, 1879. While travelling he felt the urgent need of a guide book, which should "be a Pocket-Guide, not an Encyclopædia, nor a History like the Satchel Guide, but better: a clear, brief, concise, *syllabus* of the routes, fares, hotels, objects of interest, etc., for the Summer-tourist, and which can be carried in your pistol pocket." He had the satisfaction of seeing his "pet invention" issued in many editions, and in 1899 adopted by Blair & Company, to include with their code, for presentation to their letter-of-credit customers.

A few days prior to sailing for home, Mr. Stedman had written to Henry Holt:

Dobson has made up a most exquisite, attractive, copious book of verse for the American market. The book is dedicated to Holmes, and the poems are effectively grouped in divisions: "Vignettes in Rhyme," "Poems of the Eighteenth Century," etc. The whole thing is charming as a "Loan Exhibition," and I am quite sure it will take with our people. He has urged me, and I have promised to write a short Preface to it. I much regret that your return is delayed, because I ought soon to negotiate with some house for bringing out this rare volume—and it naturally would first be offered to you. My own belief is that any publisher might be glad to take it—it differs from ordinary *ventures* in poetry.

Mr. Holt published "Vignettes in Rhyme" early in 1880. In his dedication of the book to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Mr. Dobson wrote the phrase, "made me very pleased and proud." Stedman objecting to the use of "very" before a participle, changed the phrase to "made me very proud and happy,"

and laughingly advised Mr. Dobson of his act, who at once replied:

Dear S———: The error is allowed:
'Tis clear I can't be "pleased" and "proud";
So, if it give your scruples ease,
Let me be "proud"—and what you please.
Indeed, I'm rather glad I said it;
It shows how carefully you edit,
And if I break the head of *Priscian*,
I hope you'll always be physician,
Since you so cleverly can cut
A plaster for his occiput—
Making it plain how close you follow,
In all his attributes, *Apollo*,
Who, with a musical degree,
Like *Holmes*, was also an M. D.

In a copy of Andrew Lang's, "XXII Ballades in Blue China," Mr. Dobson wrote for Mr. Stedman:

'Twas I, Dear Friend, of late you wrote,
That like De Banville sang;
But now you'll have to add a note,
And say that it was Lang!

Mr. Stedman was delighted by the warmth of admiring friends of "Vignettes in Rhyme." "Do look at the letter, etc., enclosed!" he wrote the poet. "See what a genuine tribute. I am sure it will go straight to Mrs. Dobson's heart. You need not tell her how jealous I am of you,—and well may I be, when an amateur in the wilds of Pennsylvania writes to me (*O Gracilis Puer!*) *not* that he has bought for distribution fifteen copies of my poems, but that number of yours! Why, he is a regular Dobsonian colporteur."

Of the book, Brander Matthews wrote to Mr. Stedman:

I have gone through the volume again. Slowly and carefully studying with new delight poems long familiar to me but suddenly made richer and of wider reach by the few paragraphs of your crystal prose. A true poet, when he turns critic, has words of

magic potency, some strange "open sesame," to lay bare at once inner meanings and hidden beauties, which we poor mortals would otherwise pass blindly by.

Your preface has put my admiration for Dobson's work on a firmer foundation and given it a higher flight than ever before. And I like his poems not the less because they have now given me the great pleasure of seeing my name cited by you with words of flattery,—one of the most delightful surprises of my life.

Five years afterwards, in a new book of poems, "At the Sign of the Lyre," Mr. Dobson gave Mr. Stedman a charming surprise which the latter felt was a high honor. This was the Dedication:

To Edmund Clarence Stedman

No need to-day that we commend
This pinnace to your care, O friend!
You steered the bark that went before
Between the whirlpool and the shore;
So,—though we want no pilot now,—
We write your name upon the prow.

Shortly after his return, Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co. brought out "Lyrics and Idylls, with Other Poems"—the English edition of the poems which Mr. Stedman felt most fairly represented him. Writing to a friend, he says: "I enclose you the famous notices I have received thus far. My idea was right—that I should do wisely to put two purely American pieces at the beginning of the book. The English look for what they call our home-flavor, and you will observe they especially like that Sleighing lyric!"

Edmund Gosse hailed him as "the most distinguished poet born in the United States since 1820." And closed his review in the *Academy* with these words: "In bidding Mr. Stedman cordially welcome to our shores we hope that the English public may extend to him no less favor than his own countrymen have done. His poetry is fresh and buoyant, full of memories of great deeds and joyous experiences, and seems to contain the elements of lasting popularity."

Deeply gratified, Stedman wrote to Gosse:

You have done an open-handed, *plucky*, and most generous thing, in your notable review of my book, in the *Academy*. 'Tis one of those things for which it is impossible to thank you sufficiently, for which it will be hard to show adequately my practical appreciation. Nothing could be of greater service to me, *at home* and abroad. I feel indeed how much I owe to you for so timely and outspoken a notice, bearing your signature,—and I never have dared to think so well of myself as now, reading this most sympathetic article from your critical and scholarly hand. It arrived just in time to give me a merrier Christmas in our new home; and now I must study in some way to repay you for being so very kind to my virtues—and so tender with my faults. And I well know that actions speak louder than these poorly-written thanks.

Stedman dedicated "Lyrics and Idylls," to his beloved Mr. Whittier, in the opening poem "Ad Vatem," and Mr. Whittier wrote to him:

OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, MASS. 12th Mo. 31, '79.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am in a condition to fully sympathize with thy regret at not meeting me at the Holmes Breakfast. I have long wished to see thee, and had hoped I should do so at the Breakfast, but I left without knowing that we had been sitting so near each other. Let me hope that when next in Boston, a half hour's ride in the cars will bring thee to Oak Knoll.

I have been looking over thy beautiful volume. I am familiar with a large number of the poems,—but many were entirely new to me. It is a collection which any poet might well be proud of. While I admire the strength and power of the elegiac poems, and the war-pieces, I am especially charmed with the graceful and tender idyls. Thanks for the "Heart of New England," for "The Doorstep," "Seeking the Mayflower," "Fuit Ilium," "Old Love and New," "Country Sleighing," and "The Freshet," "The Lord's-Day Gale," "Old Brown, etc.," and the "Old Admiral" are especially noticeable and excellent.

And let me say that I am very grateful for the compliment paid me in the opening poem. I know I do not deserve it: but I nevertheless thank thee from my heart.

My work such as it is, is done. Thine has only begun: but its present achievement makes the future success sure. Indeed if thee never write another stanza, thy place is assured in American literature, as the worthy successor of Bryant.

With every good wish of the blessed season, I am very truly thy friend

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

There is one poem in thy volume which has the stamp of immortality upon it. "The Discoverer" has always seemed to me one of the most striking and powerfully suggestive poems of our time.

January 5, 1882, in his diary, Stedman says, "This Philistine town is making a fool of itself over Oscar Wilde. Pah!" Six days later, he wrote to Mr. Clement of the Boston *Transcript:*

I wish to express for myself,—and I am sure my brother authors would feel the same,—a sense of unbounded gratification over the Editorial in the *Transcript* concerning Oscar Wilde's lecture at Chickering Hall.

So far as I know, the *genuine* writers, poets, and journalists, of this city have kept out of his way and are not over-pleased with the present revelation of the state of culture on Murray Hill, and among our *soi-disant* intelligent and fashionable classes. I do not blame a clever humbug, like Wilde, for taking advantage of their snobbery and idiocy, and making all the money *he* can. He is a shrewd man of the world, and D'Oyley Carte is running him as a speculation. Before leaving London, O. C. procured—through the influence of his titled "patronesses—" *hundreds* of letters of introduction, addressed to all leading writers and fashionables in our chief cities. He has *sent* me two, from two people so eminent that you would be surprised to hear their names. I have taken advantage of the London *option* in such matters, and have declined to acknowledge them as binding on me—and have also declined seven or eight requests to meet him at receptions and private lunches, etc. As I have devoted months to pointing out the talents of other young English poets—genuine workers who would scorn such advertising—no one suspects me of jealousy. It is simply self-respect, and contempt for our rich people here—who

see *no difference* between writers, between Longfellow and Emerson —and Bryant—and Wilde! After being a kind of missionary here for twenty-five years, I must own that "society" here has not advanced, as *to literature*, one particle. They *see* pictures and decoration, and so have *had* to know something about those things, but they *never* read books. I am now hesitating whether to send to my tailor for buckles and breeches and hose, or to sell my house and go to the country. Of course I do not wish my personal action reported—this is a private letter—but I want you to understand how men like myself regard this thing—and I do hope that *Boston* will not aid New York in making America again the rightful laughing-stock of England. I suppose Wilde and Carte will cart away $100,000., and London will think us all d—d fools. I have given Mrs. Bigelow, Mrs. Botta, etc., my future opinion of the value of their courtesies to myself. On Sunday evening, Mrs. Croly gave a reception *To Miss Alcott*. My wife went. I stayed away, fearing Wilde would be there. He *was* there—and next day my name, to my wrath, was among the guests.

This private letter was printed, and some of the journals disagreed with Mr. Stedman's opinions. "It was too bad of Clement to give you away," wrote Mr. Aldrich, "but what you said and the way you said it commands respect from decent men of Letters. I thought of playing Wilde in the Contributors Club, but have decided not to do so. Nothing cuts a showman or a literary clown like no notice at all."

To Edmund Gosse.

New York, February 20, 1882.

Your letter of the 2d was exceedingly welcome, particularly as I was not sure but all my London friends, of the singing guild, would resent my want of respect for Mr. Oscar Wilde. His campaign has degenerated into its necessary grade: having begun it with amazing vanity and notoriety, having really nothing to say that was not current here when I was a schoolboy, and having purposely made a guy of himself to obtain notoriety and audiences at whatever cost, the διπολλον took him at his own valuation—as a laughing-stock.—Let any modest and sincere English author come over here, and he instantly will find the honor and friendship that he deserves. I send you a final batch of my son's clip-

pings—merely to show the somewhat ludicrous status of Wilde's American "reputation." Even if he had dressed and acted like other men, the forced and hackneyed character of his "lecture" would have made him a failure. The truth is that we all read Keats years ago,—that "æsthetics" (the word is now in contempt) of the true kind was a study here in our youth, and we cannot allow that O. W. has created or discovered the Beautiful. If he were permitted to see the interior of our best homes, he would find that *he* has little to teach their owners.

Always just, we find Stedman, in 1887, when the thirteenth edition of "Victorian Poets" was issued, writing to Rennell Rodd:

May I add a word in relation to your friend Mr. Wilde? I frankly confess that I was thoroughly out of sorts with the *method* of his American crusade—and treated him with scant courtesy. For this reason, I have been all the more careful to do full justice to his abilities, in this my first notice of his printed work.

To A. C. Swinburne.

New York, March 20, 1882.

'Tis a long time since I've written you,—certainly this is the third year since my summer's-day walk and talk with you at Holmwood,—a pleasure which I shall not forget.

Meanwhile I have been busy enough. Like most Americans I have had to earn my own living, and that can't be done, here, by writing poetry and criticism. On our return to New York I made some "ventures," and was successful enough to secure a house of my own: a pretty home, where I absolutely expect, soon or late, to welcome you as a guest whom all here, worth knowing, will delight to welcome and honor. . . . I hear, now and then, of your good health and long walks, and feel that I showed sound judgment in avowing that you had as much life in you as any living author—and more productive capacity than the sturdiest.

I have procured, and read, the third portion of your Trilogy, the *Mary Stuart*, and am thoroughly satisfied with it. It is not so lush as *Chastelard*, not so eloquent and marvellously "sustained" as *Bothwell*, but—as a drama it is more symmetrical, more self-dependent, built up with more constant sense of art. The making

of the destinies of queens and kingdoms to turn upon a scrap of paper, and on the life-long anger of a woman's wounded heart, is in the highest sense true to the law of *Circumstance*, and finely dramatic. I congratulate you on having lived to complete your triune work. You have preëmpted the theme against all future comers. I see that the philosophers generally accept your conception of Mary's character. I have taken a peculiar interest in your *Mary Stuart*, from the first,—being, on my mother's side, a Stuart of the royal line: no less, however, the fiercest of republicans!

But I write, especially, to speak of an article which will appear in the May *Harper's*, entitled "Some London Poets." It is a mere sketchy paper, written a year ago at the solicitation of my friends, the Harpers, . . . and not in any wise up to the standard of my usual work. A mere series of personal sketches, purposely light, to accompany portraits of the poets named. At the close of the paper—a portrait of yourself being included—I thought it a good occasion to use some of the hitherto *unused* portions of the long personal memorandum which you sent me in 1875—taking pains to print nothing which did not seem to me honorable and agreeable to yourself. Of course I am very anxious to have you pleased with what I have written; and have felt the more assured, because you have written me in the past that I was the one man to whose friendship and discretion you would entrust various details, and because I always have been somewhat watchful of your position in America—and careful that you should here be comprehended justly.

You will recall the fact that the *critical* nature of my chapter on yourself, in the *Victorian Poets*, prevented me from including much of the most interesting portion of your memorandum. Using it now, I add a decided feature to my *Harper's* article, and have tried to make my sketch one that can only be pleasant to yourself. This illustrated paper was written a year ago, but the engravings have caused delay in its appearance. In repeating some of our talk, I have, in justice to yourself, given your rejoinder to my comments upon your former strictures on American Poets, etc., and being also very particular, as you requested, not to appear to quote from anything written by yourself, concerning yourself. Where I *have* used your own language, or statement of your own opinions, I have added it to some reminiscence of our conversation —as you will see.

To Andrew Lang.

New York, March 26, 1882.

Like everyone else, I have read with great interest your paper on Arnold. It is specially valuable as a fair and detailed statement of his record, purposes, convictions, etc., and certainly is an adequate tribute to his genius *as a poet*—by one whom his poetry won in *youth*. I doubt if I ever can regard quite dispassionately the work of any man whose writings taught, charmed, impressed, my boyhood. It is just as well that we can't,—else no one would ever be reviewed with sympathy, with true acquaintanceship. Professor Arnold is no common man, but possibly your most acute and independent literary thinker—as for his poetry, of which you quote so liberally, I am sure that many lines would stick in *my* memory also, had I not read other poets more closely in my boyhood. By the way, before your article appeared, I had long finished a paper on Mr. Lowell, which you will see in the May *Century*,—and in it expressed an increased regard for certain of Arnold's poems.

I have, also, your vellum edition of Poe's verse,—and must, without restriction or reservation, express my great enjoyment of your essay on Poe as a poet. Altogether the most subtle and correct detection of his essential quality. As a piece of literary workmanship, though brief, I don't know that you ever have excelled it—and am sure no one else can, on this theme. It has been reviewed generally, over here, and I presume your publisher has sent you the leading notices. Here is a short one, which I cut by chance from the *Post* (N. Y.) some time ago. You could have found, I think, original editions of Poe on Mr. Locker's shelves. But why, O why! do you instance *Loeda* as American? You can't suppose that any proof-reader here would deliberately pass that word! Of course it was a blunder of years ago,—mechanically reproduced by an ignorant publisher. It is unfair to hint that any Yankee would, *on principle*, spell Leda in that atrocious way—The "spelling-reform" vandals seem equally divided, nowadays, between England and America. As for changes pretty well in use here—they seem to be gaining ground in England. But I trust you never will spell theatre with a *ter*.

In the May *Harper's* is to appear my gossipy and forlorn, and long delayed, sketch of "Some London Poets"—and I am vexed enough that it should come out the same month with my "Lowell"

in the *Century*. It was written a year ago, hence forgive the ancient and *incomplete* allusions to you and your work. If anyone abuses me for the whole article, be a friend and speak up for me,—for you know that I am not a professional gossip, and that this paper was written solely to further the interests of my friends. I *hope* it is not in very bad taste.

Upon the publication of his article, in answer to a letter from R. H. Horne, Mr. Stedman writes:

Your remarks on the *Harper's* article are all welcome, and I think very kind and just. Other poets would have been included, as you suggest, but my sketch was a reminiscence of a few who were my friends and whom I had the good fortune to have seen. Your portrait, heading the article, was a most impressive and Titanesque vignette, and is universally so considered. More than one of my acquaintances has cut it out and framed it—and a proof of it hangs on my walls. I like it much better than the younger and feebler bas-relief. Some men are not ripe till they are eighty! Large fruit reddens slowly. I observe the points you make regarding my criticism, and frankly own up that there is a difference between "carelessness" and the rough strokes that are put in of purpose aforethought. There is, as I have said of Emerson's, an "art *above* art"—and much of your apparently broken work undoubtedly illustrated it. Mrs. Browning's case, as you say, is in point; but I think that both the Brownings and yourself, in your boldest and purest designs, sometimes, like all people of original genius, fail to hit the mark which you so often pierced through and through. It is of the nature of genius (*not* of mere talent) to fail utterly now and then, among all its splendid successes. Our latter-day poets never fail: they are always "correct," but at the cost of the Theban sweep, vigor, boldness of flight.

The face which I spoke of as showing sensibility was utterly spoiled, owing to a slip of the burin, by the engraver. It is not in the least, as to the lower portion, like the photograph which I had before me.

Lang has made brave strides of late. His "Helen of Troy" is, at all events, a lovely creation, and has made him still better known in America.

The previous January, 1882, to a friend, Mr. Stedman had said: "We *hope* to go abroad next Summer. Think of it, we never have seen the Alps, never have seen *Rome*. I have been for many Summers fishing and tramping in our own wildwoods, and feel as if I wanted to see more of the cities and other works of men, before settling down in life's afternoon."

As his affairs with "incessant alertness" improved, he was able, in company with his son Arthur, to sail on the *Brittanica*, May 2, 1882. Clarence King, "The Frolic and the Gentle," was also a passenger, and the trip across was enjoyable. Stedman passed a few days in London, attending the Fête at Albert Hall; the Dinner of the Electrical Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, where he responded to the toast of the *American Exhibitors*. He had also a memorable day at the Derby—"on Clarence King's elegant drag—four horses, footman, lunch hamper, etc. A glorious and characteristic Derby Day, Frith's picture to the life. Saw *Shotover* win (Duke of Westminster's mare)."

The first week in June they took train across Northern Italy, through Milan, Verona, Padua, to Venice. Stedman was enthralled with "most fascinating choruses and arias on the Canal under our windows. View perfectly divine. Why could I not have come here at twenty-five—with a sweetheart?"

The next morning the dream was rudely broken.

"I had gone over *with* 'the majority,'" he wrote T. W. Higginson a month later, "when your friendly card of May 9 was written, and it finally reached me at Venice. In that city of light, air, and heavenly *noiselessness*, my son and myself at last had settled ourselves in ideal rooms, overlooking the Grand Canal. We had seclusion, the Molo, the Lagoon, and a good Café, and pure and cheap Capri wine. Our books and papers were unpacked for the first time, and I was ready to make an end of the big and burdensome book which I ought to have finished a year ago. *Dis aliter visum!* The next morning I was awakened to receive news, by wire,

of a business loss which brought me home, through the new Gothard tunnel and by the first steamer. Here I am, patching up other people's blunders, with the thermometer in the nineties. I have lived through worse troubles, but am in no very good humor. Let me renew the amenities of life by way of improving my disposition: and I'll begin by thanking you for calling my attention to the error *in re* Palfrey—which, of course, I shall correct. Another friend has written me to say that Lowell's father was a Unitarian—not a Congregationalist. But Lowell himself told me, the other day, that his father never would call himself a Unitarian, and that he *was* old-fashioned in his home-tenets and discipline. Mr. Lowell was under pretty heavy pressure, as you know, when I saw him, but holding his own with some composure—for a poet. . . . I have read your book on Woman with interest, but I do wish you would break into literature, *pure et simple* once more, as of old. You have done enough for your convictions."

To T. Hall Caine.

December 20, 1882.

I am under three distinct and unmistakable debts of gratitude to you: First, for your collection of English Sonnets—a kind of "bookmaking" of which I wish we had more; second, for the essay on "The Supernatural Element in Poetry"—which I found on my table when I returned from Italy, and am glad to have received from the hands of its author; third, for the early copy of your "most musical, most melancholy" "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti," the receipt of which gives me a chance to write this letter, returning you my most cordial thanks, and expressing my sense of the tact and timeliness with which you have executed your latest and most delicate task. There doubtless will be many a book written upon this "sleepless *man* who perished in his pride"—this full-veined scion of Italy who drew his sap from English soil—and I shall look with profound interest for the volume which, soon or late, our heroic friend Watts surely will give us; but no work can render void your own offering,—none can be invested with so *immediate* a pathos and with such a lingering halo or aureole of the painter-poet himself. Your tale is naturally,

frankly told, and with modesty withal. It is a dramatic monologue; the facts are like the unveiling of some mystical picture, for the first time, to most of us: and the criticism is usually that with which I am in sympathetic agreement.

I am struck by the propriety and delicacy with which you enlarge upon the unhappy feud between Mr. Buchanan and the Rossetti group of poets. This reminds me that Rossetti was annoyed that Buchanan was grouped, under the caption "Latter-Day Poets," with Swinburne, Morris and himself; and indeed in the same chapter with himself. But this was a mere *exigency* of my book ("Victorian Poets"), of which but two chapters were devoted to the four most prominent "Latter-Day" singers—of whom Buchanan certainly then was one. Besides, I drew the sharpest possible contrast between his genius and method and those of the other three, and disposed of his case first—so that he might in no wise be thought of in my discussion of Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris. A glance at the volume will explain the whole situation. I tried to do full justice to Buchanan's genuine quality as an idyllic poet of *Nature*, but deprecated his "poetry with a mission," and intimated that his controversies and preachments had done him poor service. At all this he took some umbrage, but we met by chance in Paris last June, and parted good friends. Until recently, I had drawn the inference, from Swinburne's "Under the Microscope," etc., that the feud was rather between Messrs. Swinburne and Buchanan, than with Rossetti. And, with the exception of my slight reference to Mr. Buchanan's controversies, I chose to ignore altogether your local strifes, and to treat each poet solely upon the merits of his actual work. The chapter on Rossetti was long ago written, but I think it shows how profoundly I felt the unique and imaginative quality of his genius. When criticising an author I try to *dwell in his body and soul* for the moment, to see what he felt and meant, and to ask how far he has succeeded in experiencing his feeling and meanings. I am impressed by Rossetti's statement to you with respect to "Ulalume" and "The Blessed Damozel," having myself felt that the latter in some way (in a higher and purer key) restrict the chords that tremble in the former.

When in Liverpool, last May, I came suddenly upon "Dante's Dream," at the Art Exhibition there—and Father Hennepin could not have been more astonished when he first came upon Niagara

in the primeval forest! It is the only *large* picture of Rossetti's that I have seen—I first knew him, when myself a youth, through his drawings for the illustrated Tennyson.

You have quite a field of your own, in your paper on the Supernatural in Poetry. I have read it with great interest, and value it for its subtle and original treatment of a fascinating subject.

From Mary Clemmer.

March 10, 1883.

I am deeply touched by the kindness of your letter. I find myself pausing over it—to inquire does this *all* come from the intrinsic kindness of his nature? Or is it possible that he finds anything he wants—in my poor book?—and yet—all the time I know that it was because the inner vision saw your kindness, and the inner heart felt it,—that I sent the book to you at all. I have long been fond of your "Victorian Poets." It is not shut away in the library, but stays in my study with the books I care enough for to wish always by me, and it has as its next comrades those Kings of Criticism, Matthew Arnold and John Morley. But I feel in you, what I am not conscious of at all in Matthew Arnold—and in but a lesser degree in John Morley,—the kindness of your nature,—that is sympathy,—potent enough in itself to weaken the force of your criticism were your perceptions less clear, fine, and strong. . . .

I wrote as far as you see on the other page—when one of my million interruptions made me pause till—now. You know just how it is, in your crowded life I am sure,—and will believe me when I say that I have waited only for a quiet half hour to chat with you in peace,—for no day have I forgotten your kindness in writing.—You might have written me with all the politeness I could claim without one pulse of the real kindness that I felt and still feel. I trust I may live to fulfil the *best* you can hope for my inspiration—I will not say work—for as I am the daughter of necessity—thus far, I have given little to the world but the faithful work of faculties applied to current events to material things,—while the whole creative soul of me waited in abeyance with such patience as it could command. Should yielding circumstance ever allow it free course to express its being I may lay in your hand some offering of mind and spirit with less deprecation. Not that the verses I sent you were less than absolutely real, but most of

them were written under such unfavoring conditions—that I claim nothing for them artistically.—The repose of leisure looking out to far horizons has never been mine. I speak the more freely of this to you, because I see by the way you write me of your prose and verse that you are no stranger to the feeling of longing—for the full possession of your "first love." You say everything to me when you write: "I am full of unwritten verse and hungry for the end of my essay work." Yet what cause for gratitude you have,—that however enforced,—the "essay work" is not of the ephemeral sort—but is in itself an authority and a standard. Save to the elect few you are better known and more widely read than if you had never written them. As I said in the first of this letter they are a perpetual delight to me. You will know what I mean when I say that they are among the books that I turn to over and over,—that lie within reach of my hand. Will you kindly tell me in what number of the *Century* I can find what you wrote of some English poets including Mrs. Webster? A friend in my parlor yesterday in referring to Mrs. W. in the most appreciative terms speaking of her wonderful definitions of Nature,—spoke of your article—I have looked through many "Centuries" but cannot find it. Of course I have your mention of her in "Victorian Poets," but supposed he referred to something else.

I find John Albee's poems full of New Castle, full of the atmosphere, the color, the feeling of that enchanting place, and I shall look for further exquisite revelations when *you* also have passed through its "sea change" rich and strange. Well, what perfect comradeship you two will have together there. I am glad you like Mr. Albee. He seemed to me a rare nature—though I have met him most slightly and most seldom—so seldom, and so slightly it is very kind of him to speak of me at all.—I trust I may see him, and also Mr. and Mrs. Stedman in my home next Winter.

Poor Sam Bowles!—he died by inches of "Journalism." He never outlived the over-strain of his youth. Once before sailing for Europe he gave me a small photograph book saying: "Mary Clemmer this is for your pet friends; I have limited the number to twenty!" When convenient I wish Mr. Stedman would send me a small picture of himself to add to the "precious few." I venture to send you one taken last Autumn in Boston whose only merit is its unconsciousness. I was not sitting for a picture when it was

taken. Mind I do not assume that you will want it in the least but I want yours. Hoping to receive a line from you concerning Mrs. Webster before I sail for Europe, June 20, I am always sincerely.

A letter, similar in affectionate character to the previous one, must have been as grateful to Mr. Stedman as the praise of the most famous:

I feel as if I had been engaged in a kind of confidence game—and sending you papers, and getting from you the most charming of letters in exchange. And now, to crown all, comes the *Tribune*, with the trace of your more than friendly office in its generous notice of me. I protest to you I am positively ashamed of having got so much out of you on so small an investment. I sent you the lecture only that you might see how much I have been indebted to "Victorian Poets." I may say that I found my subject there, and pretty much all I made of it. That I knew you would see, and I felt that, seeing so much, you would acquit me of weakness in sending the thing to you. Well, without more words, I want to assure you how grateful I am for your brotherly interest in me. It is more than a pleasure—it is a kind of inspiration—for a wretched newspaper drudge as I am to get a breath of the air you live in, and feel that I have friends in the big world outside my little one. Another confession of false pretenses which I should have made long ago: The *Courier's* notices of your book—they were written indeed at my instance and almost, I might say, in my household—but I did not write them. Dr. Wright, by odds the best man in our town, wrote them. And some time I want you to know him.

Will you ever come to Buffalo again? You don't imagine what a lasting pleasure of memory you left in the little house you once visited. The little fellow who has the gold piece is now almost six years old, and has a brother two years. What fun it is to have children! Here am I, on the daily treadmill—political, literary, scissors and managing editor—with scarcely a moment a day in which to "contemplate existence," and yet I find it worth while to live, for my home and a few friends' sakes. Isn't that about the best there is of it, after all? As for any literary aspirations I may once have had, they are quenched. *Plus de rèves!* But one must try to live a little poetry, even if he can't write it.

To Matthew Arnold.

February 29, 1884.

Permit me to say that nothing but a point of honor made me leave the Authors' Club last night just before the speaking began, and it was one of the most memorable "crosses" of my life. Otherwise I should have heard *you*, and should have had a chance to say a few words of genuine respect and welcome. The fact is that at that very hour there was a conclave across the street, at the Century Club, where I, as a Trustee, had to act as one of the arbitrators in a matter involving the honor and reputation of a prominent member, and I was most sacredly bound not to absent myself a moment longer. When I *could* return, you were leaving.

You very kindly spoke of my little paper on Keats. It chances that in that paper, on a minute point, I ventured to make a suggestion somewhat at variance with a portion of your own beautiful comment in the *World's Poets*. Now I am unwilling to have you suppose that I do not prefer to be taught than to teach. Like all modern English writers upon literary topics, it is difficult for me to overstate my obligations to you. I read your early essays in my youth, with—"as Mr. Emerson says" (the Boston formula!) —the greatest edification and profit. I dare say you have ceased to care much for the three "On Translating Homer," but they filled *me* with delight, and they seem just as admirable to my maturer view. I agreed, and now agree, with every word of them. And so I make bold to send you a recent article of mine on Longfellow, solely that you may see my references to your discussion of the hexameter, and of how much use that discussion was to me.

Like all other *authors*, I do hope you will complete the circle and get around, again, to your first love,—the field of poetry and *belles-lettres*. You surely have earned the right to rest awhile from your forays into Philistia, and to lead us again beside the pleasant streams of Arcady.

This year, Stedman wrote to the *Critic and Good Literature:*

I receive to-day a broad-margined little book, published this year in Liverpool, which contains one hundred "Epigrams of Art, Life, and Nature," each comprised in a quatrain of the rhymed elegiac form. The author is William Watson. He appends to

his volume a brief and discerning "Note," giving his view of "the nobler sort of Epigram," tracing this down from the Greek *Inscription*—often perfect in beauty, and with all liberty of range. Mr. Watson finds the bravest examples of the modern epigram in his Landor, placing at their front the matchless quatrain which begins,

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife."

He also quotes with just praise Sydney Dobell's lines "On the death of Edward Forbes:"

"Nature, a jealous mistress, laid him low.
He woo'd and won her; and, by love made bold,
She showed him more than mortal man should know,
Then slew him lest her secret should be told."

From Emerson he cites, "Thou canst not wave thy staff in air," etc. I think he cannot be familiar with Mr. Aldrich's verse, or he would find there more than one perfect instance of the "nobler sort" of epigram from which he derives his tests. It is no small praise to our latest epigrammatist to say that not a few of his own quatrains show him to be at least an apt pupil of the masters old and new. I will pick a handful of these gilded arrows from his quiver, for the benefit of those whom they may not otherwise reach. . . .

An entry in the diary, January 14, 1876, reads: "All the Browning men in England and the United States are furious because I venture to criticise their idol—and don't see that I have praised him also." To one such complaint Stedman felt compelled to answer:

But why put to me the foremost literary conundrum of the past twenty years? Why, no less than five "Browning Societies" have been formed to discuss and solve the "Childe Roland" riddle,—and all this in the life-time of the poet himself! Who either can't or will not explain it. (How absurd—these Browning clubs in London and Boston!) I have not the slightest doubt that he wrote Childe Roland as an effect of *tone*,—a kind of "*symphony in oscuro*,"—the long poem produces on me just the effect of the single line in Shakespeare, only prolonged—sustained—and that is all

there is of it—and 'tis superbly done, and an endless, troubled dream—at the close, a leap in the dark.

To these Browning references may be added the following:

To Westland Marston.

March 11, 1883.

I have written to Philip the reasons for my delay in acknowledging your very kind and welcome letter and gifts,—and have touched upon other matters which may interest you.—The engraving of yourself at forty is very spirited, and doubtless others, like myself, have noticed its semblance to the early portraits of Thackeray? But it is astonishing how young some of you hard-workers manage to keep—I can't see a year's difference between your photographs at forty-four and fifty-eight, both of which I pronounce faithful and am glad to possess. By and by I shall find a use for one of them. *One* I shall give to Mr. R. H. Stoddard who always writes and speaks in good terms of your career.

By the way: In my chapter on Browning, ten years ago, I followed the many authorities that speak of his "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" as having been a "failure" (on the whole) at the time of its production as a *stage-play*. Mr. Gosse recently, in a careful paper on R. B., "traverses the records," as lawyers say, and says that it was a success. If my authorities were wrong, I wish to correct my statement in a new edition—(in which also more mention should be made of your dramatic work).

I also said the "Strafford" met with "no great success," and afterwards that his stage-plays "had been failures." While an unstinted admirer of Mr. Browning's Plays, as poetic dramas,—and especially of "Pippa Passes,"— the "authorities" all told me that those produced had been failures, professionally considered.

Mr. Dickens is reported, in W. Shepard's "Pen Pictures," as having said:

"Notwithstanding its beauty, I suppose Browning never intended it ("A Blot") to be acted?" asked one. "O, yes," he (Dickens) replied; "Browning requested me once to fit it for the stage, and I did so. It was not the fault of the play that it was not successful; it was because the audience were not up to it."

Macready's entries in his Journal Feb. 4–24, 1843, suggest a failure of "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon."

Some time, when Philip is writing me, pray tell him your memory or impressions of the success or failure of Mr. Browning's stage plays. I do not wish to *quote you*, should your recollection be adverse to Mr. Gosse's beliefs, but I do wish to correct my statement, if it was wrong as a matter of fact. . . .

To W. P. Garrison.

January 16, 1885.

More than likely you are not the reviewer of poetry who trusses ortolans so neatly, and serves them up in the *Post*. But I have been trying to steal time to write *him* a private letter,—and will, at any rate, ask you, as an acquaintance, to convey my remarks to him. "Why don't I simply address them to the *Post* columns?" Because I hate to see my name in print, except at the end of a regular piece of work, and because my little complaint does not warrant it. I usually receive all the credit I deserve, and often get ideas from those who find fault with me.

The fact is that the *Post's* reviews of *other* people seem to me so good, that I suspect they are more than half right as to me. But let me enter a protest against the *Post's* renewed conviction that I am "an enemy," or hostile, to Robert Browning's work. I did *not* write a "Preface" to a very meagre selection from his poems that appeared in '83, but reluctantly permitted the editor to reprint an article on Browning, written many years ago, and certainly open to modification. Still, in that article there is no charge of "immorality" against Browning's work. I said that portions of it conveyed a certain moral—the "liberty and sovereignty of love"—but did not say that I *objected* to it as presented in his verse. Nor do I.

As to his dramatic genius the *Post* has said that I denied it—and has doubted that I know what a dramatic poem is—"which," as Bret Harte says, "caused me great surprise." I wrote that "his dramatic gift, so rare in this time, calls for recognition and analysis. . . . He, without doubt represents the dramatic element of the modern English school." But I added that, with certain modifications, he was not a dramatic poet in the *early* sense of the term; that his plays are "not like the models of the true histrionic eras—the work of Fletcher, Shakespeare, etc. They have the sacred rage and fire, but the flame is that of Browning, and not of the separate creations, etc., . . . His own personality

is evident in the speech, etc., of almost every character. . . . But he is the poet of psychology. . . . He has founded a sub-dramatic school, whose office is to follow the working of the mind and discover the elements of which human motives and passions are composed." If I implied any doubt of his great dramatic power (of this kind) I certainly did not *mean* to. And I praised "Pippa Passes," "Men and Women," etc., without stint, and termed him the most intellectual of poets, and, *when he chose to be*, *one* of the most lyrical.

In truth,—while I have paid tribute to Swinburne's phenomenal melody, rhythm, winged thought,—Browning is about the only poet now writing whom I really care to read. I am not his enemy, but his humble and grateful friend, as a critic and from personal intercourse with him. For years he was a close friend of my family, in Florence, and I pray that the *Post* will not call me his enemy—even in fun (for one can see the wink in your critic's eye as he applies that term to poor Mr. White.)—It *has* fallen within my province to say that Browning's "caprices" and "contempt for form" prevent him from being "entirely great." But the *Post* is not with those who make themselves absurd, and would make any other poet ridiculous, by resenting *any* criticism on Browning.

One thing more. I do *not* set the technics of verse above the spirit. No single chapter of the "Victorian Poets," for example, fairly represents it. It is a synthetic work, and must be read as a whole. It constantly deprecates the want of imagination in our merely technical artists and poets; declares decoration of less moment than construction; calls for simplicity and passion, and sets the *spirit* of poetry above the mere fashion of the day.

There! It is years since I have written a line to a reviewer, and my only apology for inflicting all this upon you must be that I hope you will good-naturedly deem it, by implication, a compliment,—albeit a tedious one.

From T. W. Higginson.

January 26, 1885.

I am the *offender*, as I wrote those "Recent Poetry" papers. Part of your letter, about your not thinking Browning a dramatic poet, seems to refer to some other article in the *Post*. But I think I said once before, in reviewing in the *Nation*, the Browning collection itself, much what I said December 18, in connection with

Stoddard's Swinburne. Looking at the book again, I receive just the same impression as before from what you say. You are describing what you call the "dominating sentiment," of Browning's poetry; and this you call on the next page (59) defending "the elective affinities against impediments of law, etc." Here, I join issue with you and think Browning has treated all these situations in the same dramatic and impersonal way he does all others, and without in the least espousing them or showing any "dominating sentiment" in the matter. To charge him with such a dominating sentiment is, in my view to charge his poems with immorality; and to be as unjust as to charge him with inculcating regicide by the effect of Pippa's verses on the young conspirator. It may be that when reviewing the book itself I may have said that in this direction you failed to recognize his dramatic quality, but I don't remember saying so. At any rate this is all the difference between us that what you call "dominating sentiment" I call simply a part of an immense dramatic activity, not tinctured with any desire to enforce a moral or even an *immoral*, if I may so use the word.

With much of your criticism of Browning I should agree.

To T. W. Higginson.

January 27, 1885.

On rereading my early Browning article, I am not sure but that I did lay myself open to the opinion which you form. The section in relation to his (of course) dramatic lyrics of love and intrigue was written in view of the fuss made about Swinburne's youthful priapism. And, while I recognize that B., as a dramatic poet, is putting the thing, *usually*, from the third-personal point of view, I still think that, in the *finale* to "The Statue and The Bust," for instance, he comments on matters in the *first person*. But again, *I* don't object to the sentiments there expressed. There *are* crises, *me judice*, when the "higher law" may oust the law of "duty." Of course, then, the *dramatis personæ* must take the consequences. And where would our art and drama be, but for tragedy of all sorts?

As to the distinction which I drew between Browning and the early dramatists, I think it sound. Were I to rewrite the article I should leave no confusion as to my recognition of his profound dramatic genius, *essentially* considered.

To Horace E. Scudder.

October 25, 1885.

You will not, I am sure, estimate the pleasure which your letter has given me by the apparent sloth with which I thank you for it. Indeed, in very truth, it is thus far the cause of quite the keenest gratification derived from the completion of my recent task, and the most unexpected—though, if it were my privilege to know you as I should have known you, I should have no occasion to use the second adjective. That privilege must be mine henceforth; as it is, I shall not easily forget your voluntary, generous, lightening of the doubt which often puts its dull cloud between a workman and his ended work,—an office performed in the true spirit of one's peer and fellow-craftsman. It is only such men of the craft as you who comprehend what goes to the making of a purely literary work. Browning has said as much, and who knows it better or can say it as well!

What does me the most good is your belief in the care and sincerity of my effort, your assurance that I have not neglected those minor matters of the law which are incumbent upon drudges and geniuses alike—for the neglect of which no amount of cleverness should be permitted to make amends. The gift of writing, the graces of wit, fancy, imagination,—these come by nature and are the good fortune, not the honest earnings, of an essayist or poet. But commend him justly for a scholar's accuracy, for conviction and honest purpose, and you pay him a tribute of which he has some right to be proud.

And, from what I have observed, always, in your own scholarly and equable writings, critical and otherwise, there is no man among us with a juster claim than you to be the arbiter of such matters. In reading your own criticisms, I must own that where I have differed from you at the first, in the end I usually have come around to your opinion. In fact, I well remember an instance, to this effect, connected with your review of my "Victorian Poets," ten years ago. While giving that book every whit of approval that it merited, you took exception to my estimate of Browning. This led me, afterward, to examine that chapter closely and anew. I found that I had not clearly enough *expressed* my real admiration of that great man's genius—that I had not subordinated it plainly enough to my impatience with his caprices and his persistency in issuing books which were often no *advance* on his early dramas and dramatic lyr-

ics and on those wonderful *tableaux vivants* of "Men and Women." I have since confessed the same to Mr. Browning (who, like his wife, was the intimate friend and neighbor of my parents) and have spoken to him of your criticism—the latter quite antedating the recent extravagant genuflections of the Browning *sociétaires*. After all, what other modern poet is there whom men of our years care much to read? Who else so plays upon the harp of *Life*, for whose music I find myself calling upon the idle singers of the new generation. At all events, in my supplement to the "Victorian Poets," I mean to construct a few sentences that shall in some measure express my sense of the chief shortcoming of that book.

Your friendly letter, coming from a writer always at work, is the more generous in that there is nothing in my book connected with your own record: it applies to authors in a department where, so far as I am aware, you do not compete. What you say of your scheme for a series of critical monographs is very interesting. The first new one written, whether of the compact scope of the *Balzac* and *In Memoriam*, or, like my own, more "dimensional," must be from your own pen. You ought to do something of the kind, by way of fully utilizing, for once at least, your skill and sympathetic perception in that class of work. One difficulty, in this country, in carrying out so attractive a design—and one so elevating to the standard of criticism, is that few of our best men have the means and strength permitting them to do the work for the sake of doing it. Nothing could justify *me*, at least, in again making the sacrifices, for myself and my household, entailed by my recent prose labors. Yet I should dearly enjoy writing the very monograph on Theocritus of which you conceive,—and certainly would do it should fortune, strength, leisure, alike be propitious.

But this long discourse is a shabby rejoinder to your cordial and suggestive letter. I am somewhat isolated, after all, in this Babylon of a commercial town, and wish indeed that I had such a man as you for a co-workman, associate, confabulator and dropper-in-o'-nights. Perhaps our courses may in time run more nearly together on the chart. You *will* come and see us, will you not? whenever you visit New York? We can give you a hearty welcome any time, and household cheer, though not in our own home. And next year I hope to get back to the house already somewhat consecrated to visits from a few of whom the world is not yet

worthy. If I pass through Boston you may be sure I shall talk further with you.

A comment made in 1902 to Mrs. Florence Earle Coates may be of interest:

I find in these furnished rooms a bookcase with volumes ranging from Boswell's "Johnson" and Baxter's "Saints' Rest" (actually) to Balzac: among other things the Harper edition, 2 vols., of the "Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett." For the first time I have read them carefully throughout. There has been discussion whether they should have been published, and hitherto I have thought it a kind of sacrilege. I have changed my view. It would have been almost a crime to have permitted this wonderfully exceptional interchange of mind and soul between "those strong excepted" beings to leave no earthly trace forever. But they should have been printed, if possible, only for *you* and *me* and our kindred! Certainly, not printed for monetary profit—unless the returns could be devoted to some most consecrate memorial or beneficence.

From William Watson.

July 9, 1887.

I hasten to reply to your letter which reaches me this morning, forwarded by Kegan Paul & Co.

The volume of so-called "Epigrams," issued from a local press in 1884, was by me, and your very friendly letter in the New York *Critic*, reviewing the little book and making admirably judicious selections from its contents, reached me duly. In failing hitherto to thank you, I fear I must have seemed grossly insensible to your courtesy and kindness—but the fact is, I had at that time all but matured a project of visiting America, and one of the many attractive possibilities associated with this intention was the prospect of doing myself the honour to call upon you personally. The scheme fell through, various distracting circumstances occurred, and coquetting with opportunity I did myself the injustice of appearing ungrateful for a friendly act and spontaneous tribute of appreciation, trusting to some future chance of repairing the neglect which ought never to have happened.

It is with much interest that I now hear of a supplementary edition of *Victorian Poets*, and of your intention to find for me a

niche in the temple. My earliest volume, the *Prince's Quest*, was the production of a minor, and full of such latter-day mannerisms as are most alien to my adult tastes and preferences in poetry. As to the volume of "Epigrams," it is little or not at all known, but perhaps I ought in fairness to it to add that scarce any of the approved means were taken to get it known. It includes some quatrains which would have been better away, but speaking of it as a whole your own friend Mr. E. W. Gosse tells me that his pleasure in it increases as he reads it again and again, and such independent testimonies give me an assurance that it contains a certain proportion of good work which may please better after familiarity than upon a first view.

Some of my friends here, however, think that my best and certainly my most vigorous hitherto published verse is in a set of fifteen sonnets on public affairs which under the title *Ver Tenebrosum* appeared in the *National Review* for June 1885. I would gladly send you a copy of the magazine, but I gave the only one I had to a genial compatriot of yours, Professor Corson of Cornell, who paid me some time ago a visit which it is pleasant to remember. Myself and my friends, however—Professor Dowden and others—are thoroughly agreed in pronouncing my most satisfactory effort of all to be a poem (consisting of forty-seven stanzas of four lines) called "Wordsworth's Grave" which will appear in the forthcoming August number of the *National Review*. I myself think it outweighs in value all else that I have printed. If the re-issue—or rather supplementary issue—of *Victorian Poets* will admit of any notice of it I shall be highly gratified, especially if the poem should please you as much as I am in hopes it may. I will certainly send you a copy of the magazine as soon as it is out.

In response to Stedman's request for certain information, Theodore Watts, July 14, 1887, wrote:

Yesterday a friend came in while I was writing to you and I was obliged to draw my letter to a hurried and halting close. I intended to tell you that the "book" of mine you inquire about has not even yet been published, though it has been widely read as privately printed. It will however, be out in a few weeks. It is a poetic romance called Aylwin mainly in prose and partly in verse in which the idea at the heart of the Romantic movement receives a modern and in some sort a realistic embodiment.

A volume of poems is also to appear very shortly. It will consist of a selection from my numerous poems printed in the *Athenæum*, the *Academy* and other periodicals, and many new poems. Whether, until this latter volume appears, you will be able to form an idea of the nature of my poetry depends, I think, upon your familiarity with the sonnet-anthologies (Caine's Sonnets of Three Centuries, Sharp's Sonnets of this Century and Wadelington's Sonnets by Living Writers, 2nd edition) where my sonnets have been liberally reprinted. I send you therefore, a copy of Sharp's Sonnets of this Century and also a copy of Mrs. Sharp's anthology, *Sea Music*, so that you may not be misled by your knowledge of the fact that I have been brought into intimate relations with several illustrious poets and fall into the natural error of supposing that I belong to any contemporary "school." As a matter of fact my style, such as it is, was formed and my poetry was mainly written before Rossetti's first volume (of 1870) appeared and before even Swinburne's *Atalanta* appeared. As Rossetti mentions in one of his letters to Hall Caine. See Caine's Recollections of Rossetti, p. 259. And if you will compare the writings of these two great poets *after* 1870 with their earlier writings, you will find that such influence between them and me as may be traced (in the matter, I mean of a more close and intimate confronting of Nature by the artist) has not come from the two illustrious writers but rather from the obscure writer. I touch upon this because I would a thousand times rather remain in my present obscurity than be noticed as a derivative writer, or as belonging to a school. The truth is that my early open-air life was extremely unlike the lives of my more gifted friends and they have always been only *too* ready to admit that, in this matter of intimacy with Nature (that knowledge of Nature which only a country boy acquires) my influence upon them has not been inconsiderable. I should not have dreamed of speaking of my own humble effusions in relation to their glorious work were it not that I am somewhat sensitive upon the point of derivative poetry.

Your book as I know it, is so very good, however, and shows such great power of seeing into critical mill-stones that very likely, I need not have troubled you with this letter at all, as you have, you say, read a few of my sonnets printed in the *Athenæum*. Undoubtedly there is one great poet who has influenced me as he has influenced everybody save Browning—Lord Tennyson. To him

we must all, great and small, bow as Master. But otherwise among Nineteenth Century poets Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats (especially Coleridge) have influenced me.

Of course I know that only a few lines can possibly be given to me, but these few lines ought to convey a right impression and the material before you is almost non-existant, I fear.

To Theodore Watts.

September 18, 1887.

I am quite aware that your most kind, welcome, and serviceable letters of July 14th and 15th should have been at least acknowledged ere now.

But I have been both ill, and overworked with book-and-index-making, during what *should* have been my summer vacation. Besides the enlarged "Victorian Poets," I have had the supervision of the ten volume "Library of American Literature," soon to be rapidly issued. *At last* I have fairly broken loose, and retreated to this my seaside home, and must get a few words to you and other friends before the October *Century* appears. That number will contain an article, the major part of the supplemental matter to the enlarged edition of "Victorian Poets." After "traversing" in some measure, my early criticism of Browning, Arnold, etc., I come to later authors—my object being, as in the two chapters called "The General Choir" (*Victorian Poets*), to catch the *general drift* and *tendency* and draw conclusions from it. Of course the paper covers many names, therein differing from the more important early monographs, each chapter devoted to a single poet; but all the details complete the *annals* of the work. If they derogate from the purely critical standard, I must remind you that—no matter how select the standard and able the writing—the original work would not have lasted twelve years, and reached its thirteenth edition in this country, without it contained these prosaic and comprehensive facts. These have been the sprinkled sugar that has led many readers to swallow the literary and critical pills. The *real purpose* of both the "Victorian Poets" and "Poets of America" has been to give the author's *views* and *canons of poetry* and the *poetic art*, and to study a *poetic era*, and *poetic temperaments*. It does not speak well for the anti-provincial character of London Journals that so much attention was paid to the "Victorian Poets," and scarcely any to its successor, a more important

and novel work, "Poets of America." It is true that the *Quarterly* made a précis of it latterly—a long and careful paper. But the *Revue des deux Mondes*, and other French reviews at once gave it a careful and scholarly examination.

I am glad at last to be at the end of this critical writing—a portentous labor that has made me the recipient of letters, books, manuscripts, from every "Gifted Hopkins" in America and kept me from pursuing my early and natural *métier*—that of a verse-maker, possibly a poet.

And now my warm thanks for your full response to my queries, and the enclosures and facts superadded. My brief notice of Theodore Watts, I trust you will not deem without point, or unfair. Indeed, we know more of you here than you think, and for years I have been familiar with your critical and metrical work; and have always remembered our passing talk and handshake in London. Before your letters came, my "copy" had gone to press. I had previously read, and greatly admired your "Ode to a Mother Carey's Chicken"—the *title* of which somehow being the only feature which seemed out of keeping with that noble and imaginative flight of natural song. Fortunately, I managed, in correcting proof to get in a sentence about your independent position—freedom from the passing mode—of which your hint reminded me in time, and which is unquestionable. Cassell's *Celebrities of the Century* has been on my shelves from the first. Many of the notices *are* excellent, as you say; but some are very inaccurate and deficient. There! I have forgotten to thank you for your thoughtful transmission of the two Sharp anthologies. They came just in time to give me a few lacking *dates*. But this letter is too long. My love to Swinburne, whose spirit seems as fiery and unquenchable as ever.

You will be interested to read what I have said further of Swinburne. I quite agree with you as to Tennyson. I am sorry that the now too-long delayed extension of the "Victorian Poets" could not await the publication of your volume of poems, etc.,—or rather that the latter had not appeared before the period covered, i. e., before the Summer of 1887. The new work *ought* not to cover any time later than the close of "Poets of America" (the half-century). It may be delayed (though now stereotyped) by the slowness with which Houghton, Mifflin & Co., obtain portraits for the large-paper edition. A small edition probably will be issued in London, but I shall send you a copy whether or no.

In 1887, an entry in Mr. Stedman's diary is: "I am writing the Supplement to the 'Victorian Poets' for the *Jubilee* edition. Am reading three hundred volumes of poetry! (so-called)."

The willingness to reconsider, and even to modify expressed opinion is shown by the Preface to the Thirteenth Edition:

After a lapse of time which enables me to examine my original chapters almost as if they were the production of another hand, it would be strange if I did not observe certain portions that would be written differently, with later and perhaps riper judgment, if I were to write them now.

I see that frequent attention was paid to matters of art and form. Technical structure is of special interest to the young artist or critic. There was a marked and fascinating advance in rhythmical variety and finish during the early influence of Tennyson. I do not regret its discussion, since throughout the book persistent stress is also laid upon the higher offices of art as the expression of the soul, and its barrenness without simplicity, earnestness, native impulse, and imaginative power. The American treatise, less occupied with technical criticism, and examining its topic in connection with the foundation of national sentiment, enabled me to finish all I desired to say concerning poetry. These books are hopefully addressed to those who will read the two together, and each of them not in fragments but as a whole.

As to the brief opinions with respect to younger singers, I think that a good deal of what was said has been justified, and in a few cases notably, by their subsequent careers. Examining the more elaborate reviews of other poets, I wish to amend in some degree my early criticism.

With the comments upon Landor, Hood, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson, Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne, I have no serious disagreement. What is said of the last-named four, in the new text, is in keeping with what was first said, and illustrated by an account of their recent works.

I confess, however, that the prominence given to Procter seems hardly in accord with the just perspective of a synthetic view. It grew out of the writer's distaste for two characteristics of latter-day verse: on the one hand, the doubt and sadness of that which is

the most intellectual; on the other, the artificial tone of that offered by many younger poets, in whom the one thing needful seemed to be the spontaneity so natural to "Barry Cornwall."

While I thought the first of these characteristics too excessive in the poetry of Arnold, the cultured master of his school, I paid full tribute to the majesty of his epic verse. But I was unjust in a scant appreciation of what is after all his most ideal trait, and his surest warrant as a poet. For this fault I now make reparation in the supplement.

One or two errors of fact have been corrected in the original chapter on Browning, our most suggestive figure at the close of a period which Tennyson dominated in its prime. My feeling with respect to some of this profound writer's idiosyncrasies is still unchanged. Yet in view of my extended recognition of his matchless insight and resources,—and conscious of my own respect for the genius and personality of one to whose works I was guided in youth by kindred that knew and honored him,—it is hard for me to understand that even his uncompromising worshippers can discover between the lines of my criticism traces of hostility. The chapter, however, is defective in one important respect. Drawing a sharp distinction between the histrionic, objective method of the early dramatists and that of Browning, I did not at once follow it with an incisive statement of the qualities in which his power and effectiveness do consist. A praiseworthy reader—by which, as before, I mean one who accepts an essay in its entirety, and does not hang his approval or disapproval upon a single point—can find these qualities plainly set forth in the comments upon "Dramatic Lyrics," "Men and Women," "Pippa Passes," etc. But that there may be no doubt, and to make up for possible shortcomings, I have referred in the supplement at some length to the specific originality and nature of this poet's dramatic genius.

Beyond these modifications, I have none with which in this place to trouble the reader,—deprecating, as I do, finical changes in prose or poetry once given to the public, and choosing to let a treatise that has been so leniently adjudged stand in most respects as it was originally written.

From Austin Dobson.

November 17, 1887.

I must not—although (like Goldsmith) I have an hereditary indisposition to write letters—any longer delay to thank you for

the new edition of "Victorian Poets," with its brilliant supplementary chapter. I had already enjoyed the new part, or part of the new part, in the *Century*, and also had the pleasure of making it known to Munby, who is much gratified with what you say of him. The book is now reposing, imposingly, beside the other volumes on my shelves, where let us hope, the dust will never be allowed to gather very deeply upon it, despite the sublime indifference of my housemaid to the service of the brush.

When are you coming to London once more? No lips have touched your glass, which is still in the cabinet. If you do not come soon all our vintages will be as thick with cobwebs as the old Madeira, in "Dombey and Son."

I, alas! have no story to tell but one of unremitting hard work for this year. I have edited Goldsmith's Poems for the Clarendon Press; compiled a life of him; and painfully conducted through press a dull Memoir of Bewick. Of the Muses I have seen little or nothing—possibly they have been enticed away (being but women) by some younger shepherd, and you? But I have some of *your* labours before me, and I hear of others. More power to your elbow, say I; and pray give my kindest regards to Mrs. Stedman and Arthur.

To Theodore Watts.

January 25, 1888.

The *Athenæum* of the 7th inst. reaches me, and therein I find a long review of Mr. White's book and my own,—so masterly in its analysis of certain poetic "institutes," and so absolutely sound in its canons—and withal so admirably written that I am sure you are the only man in England who could have written it.

Let me at once then, and first of all thank you, and heartily, not only for the general and respectful attention paid to my labors, but especially for the really handsome and frank "boost" which you give my book at the end of your review. I well know the great value of your terse and generous dictum, of which any author living might be proud. . . .

I admire your clear and incontrovertible statement of the absolute test of English poetry—whether or no it be imaginative and essential. I mean your argument which is in demonstration of your points that "In all English poetry a sense of *la difficulté surmontée* destroys it as a sincere utterance of the poets' soul" and

again that "Anything that disturbs in the smallest degree the accent of sincerity is dangerous, is indeed fatal." All you have to say as to this is what I term "creative criticism"; and it has never been so directly and beneficially put forth before. Simplicity, spontaneousness, imagination go together in English verse. . . .

If many of the *younger verse-makers* were of your cast and creed, I should not have had to bear down upon the profession of latter-day artificial poetry, in England and America. I have enjoyed the French-form verse, as you do, *for just what it is*—and here I think you mistake a little my position. More than once in my volumes I lay stress upon the fact that a work of art must be approached with the purpose of its designer always in mind. The question is how well has he carried out his intent? Then as to its ultimate bearing and intent.

In the past I have written a good deal of *vers de societé* myself, and made my first reputation here thereby, though before the day of French Forms. And I am the culprit who brought those forms over here, by editing, with a sympathetic preface, a handsome collection of Dobson's poems for the American market—where they "took" like wildfire.

The point made in my supplement is that this "debonair verse" has come to be the *specific* feature of your new and recent English poetry—and hence expressive, almost representative, of its latest tendency and ambition. Not that it is to be taken seriously—or to be judged by the imaginative standards—but, that your young minstrels don't give us much else to take! And I will not accept it as expressive of the always-existing British imagination, that, just now, is either biding its time, or finding vent in other forms of literature than poetry.

Lang chaffs me a little, very good-naturally, in *Longman's*. I don't think poets are "made" by crises and conditions; but their seed often is *developed* into noble growth and action by the storm and stress of an heroic or favoring time and generation. *Our* "heroic crisis" did not begin with the great material war of 1861–65. It began with the great mental and political conflict (1835–1860) which led up to it. The poets had *their* say before the rifles and cannons sounded.

But, after all the main object of my letter is to thank you, once and now again, for your most generous and cordial attention to my last book. 'Tis said that Republics are ungrateful, but be

assured this does not apply to republicans, and shall not to yours very sincerely.

To H. T. Mackenzie Bell.

February 8, 1888.

I don't know *what* you think of *me*, but I have often thought of you, little as I have given token of it, since your particularly kind letter of December 1, (!) arrived—and soon after the two volumes for which I am indebted to your thoughtful generosity.

The fact is that I have been in as bad a case as your Oxford student who confessed that he "was poor, and in love, and had doubts about the Trinity"! I have been ill and terribly overworked in going to press with a "Cyclopædia," and burdened with a mail of over one hundred letters weekly. Your letter I put aside with a few others which I hoped to answer at some length; but I *will* not wait another day for that purpose, and so you see—half my four pages is taken up with that worse of all things, an explanation.

Let me thank you heartily for letting me know you and these books. Your memorial of Charles Whitehead is most valuable, and picturesquely suggestive and interesting. Though he belonged to the very early—the transition—period of strictly Victorian literature, you are quite right: he *ought* to have been noticed by me, along with Darley, Beddoes, Horne, etc., and surely would have been, if I had known half as much about him as I do after reading your full and touching memoir. He was a man of genius, and you have saved him from being henceforth a "forgotten" one. Your work is done feelingly, and yet with fine discrimination. I shall hope, when again revising the "Victorian Poets," to insert some brief notice of Whitehead.

In sending a copy of the foregoing letter, in 1909, Mr. Bell writes: "In nearly every letter from Mr. Stedman there was something almost eighteenth century in its feeling for style."

From H. T. Mackenzie Bell.

February 21, 1888.

Were any apology required for your delay in answering my letter (and, considering the circumstances under which we literary men live in these busy days over-crowded with work, I do not admit

the necessity), it has been amply given in your friendly and most cordial letter, for which please accept my warmest thanks.

It is with feelings of the utmost pleasure that I read your appreciative and valuable remarks about my book on Whitehead. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than to find that the volume has convinced men like Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and my friends Mr. Theodore Watts and Mr. Hall Caine besides many others, and now a thoroughly capable critic like yourself, of the justice of my endeavour to vindicate Whitehead's claim to a permanent place in our literature: and I am especially glad at my success in your case. As to *Old Year Leaves* I will only add an expression of my gratitude for your words of praise which I value more highly than I can adequately say.

Many thanks, also, for your kind promise to mention Whitehead and myself in the next edition of *Victorian Poets*.

I read with much interest the review of *Victorian Poets* in the *Athenæum* by my friend Mr. Theodore Watts; and fully agreed in the commendation he gave you in the last paragraph of his article; though I differed with him when he cavilled at you for your remarks about "debonair verse"—for I do not think that you say a word against a certain place being accorded to poetry of this class, (as Mr. Watts seemed to imply), what you say is against present-day poets writing little else. I always read Mr. Lang's *At the Sign of the Ship*, and shall look out for your answer in the *Critic*. Thinking that perhaps you may not have noticed it, I send you herewith a copy of the *Academy* containing an article by myself on Mr. Sladen's *Australian Ballads and Rhymes* in which I had occasion to mention you twice.

To H. T. Mackenzie Bell.

July 8, 1888.

'Tis some time since I have written you—in fact, I have not acknowledged your cordial letter of February 21. Since then I have brought out *four* 8vo. volumes of our portentous "Library of American Literature." Getting so huge and comprehensive a cyclopædia through the press means an abandonment of everything else for the time being, and keeps the editors in this superheated oven of a town during the vacation season! All "good Londoners," when they die, "go to Paris,"—and all New Yorkers who are able, good or bad, are off in the country during the Summer

months. You have no idea, unless you have been in *both* Calcutta and Spitzbergen, of the extremes of heat and cold during a year of life in New York. I read with interest and approval your occasional reviews of the Scott (or other) publications. It seems to me that you do some of the best work in the *Academy*. Kind as that journal often has been to me, I perceive that some of its latter-day articles are rather jejune, and wish the manager could afford to maintain a higher evenness of tone.

What a pity that I did not have Sladen's remarkably novel and judicious compilation of "Australian Ballads," etc., before writing my Supplement to "Victorian Poets." It would have put me on the track of several facts (notably Kendall and Stephens) of whom I know nothing. However, I shall yet overhaul that last chapter, and in some measure patch up its deficiencies—as I have previously intimated to you.

We *hope* to get an International Copyright Bill through the present Congress, but probably not before the Winter Session. It has passed the Senate, but the House will not yet bring it to a vote. . . . P. S. I believe, but am not sure, that my dear friend Dobson lives at Ealing. If so, I hope you know him.

To C. G. Duffy.

March 22, 1888.

Let me premise by observing that you have no basis for assuming that I found Mangan "worth but a line"—simply because only a few words are given to him in the "Victorian Poets."

Any reader of the whole of that work, or familiar with its synthetic plan (and I desire no other kind of readers) would perceive that the book is composed mainly of certain chapters on *eleven selected poets;* that in addition I made only a hurried and condensed survey of various *groups*, schools, and single poets to illustrate very briefly the various *phases* and *tendencies* of poetry throughout the Period; that I took just as many as were needed for *types*—with no effort to criticise them at length or adequately. To do the latter would have required ten volumes instead of one.

Often I give an inferior poet, as an illustration of some vogue or fallacy, much more *space* than is allotted to his betters, e. g., Marzials, pp. 284, 285.

On turning to pages 259, 260,—which were written by the way, in 1873—I see that I said *all I wished to say* of Irish minstrelsy,

and no more. And I did suggest that Clarence Mangan was the most original of the poets named.

Yes—I *did* own a green-bound single volume edition of Mangan's poems, but some time ago gave it to an Irish friend. Did not know it was very "rare." Should be glad to see a good article upon him, for he was a born poet—though often careless in his work. J. H. Ingram wrote a paper on him for the Dublin *University Magazine*, and there have been reviews of his poems and translations in the *Christian Examiner* and other American journals, etc.

Eight years later, Mr. Stedman writes to Ripley Hitchcock of another poet:

Yesterday I chanced to see the very nice "Ad." of Kipling's "Seven Seas"—in which Mr. Howells, E. C. S., and others, are well and properly quoted.

Just a word, which in the end may be useful to Mr. Kipling and his publishers, and which expresses a whim of my own. Though declining all other "journey-work," I did consent to write *that* review for the *Book-Buyer*, simply because Kipling "rose" too late for the 1887 edition of the "Victorian Poets," and there was something I really wished to say of him *as a poet*. That whole notice (if you chance to read it) is written up to *one point*—viz. that he is "The Laureate of Greater Britain." In distinction from Tennyson and others, English poets at the *focus*, he has moved around the world, at "Greater Britain's" *circumference*, and looked always toward the focus, and hence has the more *comprehensive* patriotism, view, imagination.

Now that I have said it, I'll bet you that others will soon call him "The Laureate of Greater Britain"—simply because it is his manifest characterization. It is a good point for Messrs. Appleton's next advertisement of the "Seven Seas," and a good phrase to introduce?

Upon the death of Matthew Arnold in 1888, Mr. Stedman in the New York *Herald*, April 17, 1888, is quoted:

After all that can be said of Matthew Arnold's shortcomings and arrogance of intellect, he did more to make manifest and amend the shortcomings and philistinism of his own people than any other Englishman of his time. He was a preacher of taste and ethics.

An excellent article on him says that "he had no disciples," but in England I have found that nearly all university men a college generation younger than Arnold, especially Oxonians, hold him in great reverence. Their way of thought often has been formed by him, even if they do not quite live by or under him. He certainly has been an inspirer of the younger men in matters of taste, feeling, thought, and has broadened English criticism. He depended greatly on the creation of catch words and phrases—a knack which he early learned from the French and Germans. In abstract matters he was a sure and able observer, but often did not use his physical vision to advantage. I think his death at this moment a sore loss to English letters.

His defects were those of his British nature; he often had the very lack of lucidity which he perceived to be the characteristic of his people.

His comments on America are those of Lemuel Gulliver on the fair but colossal maidens of Brobdingnag. He saw its coarseness, but could not measure its large beauty and distinction.

I think his very best purely literary essays to be those "On Translating Homer." As a poet of the intellect, and often of subtle and exquisite feeling, I have discussed him at length in my book, "Victorian Poems." He was most ideal in his subjective verse, despite his own theory that art should be objective.

Concerning Tennyson, some years earlier, Henry James had written Mr. Stedman:

I find on my return from an absence in the country your very gratifying and interesting letter. I am very glad that my notice of *Queen Mary* gave you any pleasure and am greatly indebted to you for taking the trouble to express it to me. I find it, I confess, rather confusing, even, to be complimented on the article in question; especially by one who speaks on poetic matters with authority. My pretentions, in attempting to talk about Tennyson, were very modest, and I made no claim to express myself as anything but, as it were, an outsider. I know him only as we all know him—by desultory reading—and indeed from a comparative and categorical examination of any great poet I would always earnestly shrink. I know poets and poetry only as an irredeemable proser. So if I have seemed to you to hit the nail at all on the head, in speaking of Tennyson, I am only the more thankful for my good fortune.

I need hardly say that your own observations strike me as very much to the point—both those in your letter and those in the enclosed sheets from your book. The latter, on its appearance, I shall be very glad to see. I hesitate to agree with you in your forecast of what Tennyson will hereafter attempt and what English poetry is likely to come to. Not that I have an opposite opinion, but simply because these are questions in which I find myself much at sea—the whole poetic mystery and its conditions being emphatically a mystery to me. I can only say that were I myself capable of using the instrument of flexible verse, I should go in with great goodwill for the dramatic form. Your prevision two years ago of Tennyson's putting forth a drama is very noticeable; and noticeable also your mention of the exceptional originality of the fable of *The Princess*—I quite sympathise with you in your wonder that Browning should have never felt the intellectual comfort of "a few grave, rigid laws." But Browning's badness I have never professed to understand. I limit myself to vastly enjoying his goodness.

A year before the Poet-Laureate's death, Stedman wrote to Aldrich:

It does not seem to me that a sage and minstrel of Tennyson's advanced years,—looking, as now, the Infinite "straight in the face"—should feel anything but a kind of supermortal satisfaction in view of a stanza like your first: since it is a kind of verdict of posterity, very sonorously expressed. Still, you know that Lord Tennyson is said to be very womanish about many things. In the case of Emerson, *he* was then beyond cognition of anything said or printed. Strong as these stanzas are, they are not an *advance*, I think, upon your fine tribute to Tennyson—the best he ever received. So the matter really rests upon your desire to pay a graceful homage to Swinburne. If you wish to do this, you need not be deterred by the question as to Tennyson, I think. In short, I don't think there will be any ground for a charge of bad taste.

Swinburne *ought* to be the poet-laureate, and I have said so for years; since he is the one great *lyric* poet and ode-writer. If not he, Dobson, as the charming *Court-poet*—of the Waller, Suckling, Prior traditions. If they select W. Morris, or our conceited *adapter* —Edwin Arnold, the laurel will turn yellow. . . . Sir Edwin

thinks (and his friend G. W. Childs assured me) that *he* is to succeed to the laureateship.

When the Poet-Laureate died, Mr. Stedman, in the *Tribune*, October 7, 1892, said:

In the death of Tennyson we have lost, bearing in mind his combination of the expression of beauty with the expression of thought, the greatest and most national of English poets since Byron. Before all others he was the representative poet of the imperial Victorian Period—as much so as Pope, with his lesser genius, was the poetic leader of the less historic Queen Anne's time. The Victorian Period, so far as its distinctively idyllic art and literature are concerned, ended, we might say, with the third quarter of our century, though the aged Queen still holds the throne, having outlived her own time. Browning, the only one of Tennyson's compeers equal to him in intellectual power, seems to me rather the forerunner of a new era than the representative of his own. For all his striking but peculiar dramatic quality, and his lyrical gift so fine at its best, I do not think he was a greater poet than Tennyson; since he became utterly indifferent to the expression of beauty, and his thought might prove to be really no profounder, to have no more insight, than the noble thought of Tennyson—if expressed with the latter's matchless clearness and simplicity.

The purest artistic excellence of the recent English muse took its note from the exquisite early lyrics, ballads and idyls of Tennyson. They seemed, besides, just as original as exquisite, at their date of production; and before all poets of the English speaking world had caught their method. Who can forget how their charm and novelty thrilled us when they slowly made their way to the American public of forty years ago? No one who did not begin with Tennyson before the date of "Maud," and then follow him along, can fully understand his influence—or do justice to the force and richness of his song. His minstrelsy blended the truth to nature, the high elevated thought, of Wordsworth, with the unrivalled style derived from Milton and Keats.

Yes, if art in English poetry was reborn with Keats, it was confirmed and matured by Tennyson. The latter's blank-verse—and that greatest of all measures is the test of an English master—is just as individual, just as characteristic, as the blank-verse of Shakespeare, of Milton, or of Wordsworth and Bryant. In fact,

then, he added a fourth order of blank-verse to our rhythmical architecture.

His shortcomings were just as manifest as his greatness, but not out of keeping with the spirit of his age. In imagination he certainly fell short of Wordsworth's most elevated mood. He failed, over and over again, in dramatic efforts, and the generally undramatic tenor of his work was confirmed by his lifelong seclusion —his intimacy with nature rather than with man. In sweep and fervor, and superb intensity, he was less than Byron—and show me any poet of our time who is not! But in the synthetic and even combination of poetic equivalents of a high order, and in artistic perfection, united, as I say, with a certain intellectual breadth and wisdom, he excelled either of those two predecessors, and, I think, his more dramatic compeer.

His art had one quality rarely absent from the greatest art. He appealed to both the select few and the multitude, on one side or the other. It has been unnecessary, at all events, to establish schools and classes, in his lifetime, for its interpretation.

"In Memoriam" alone would place him above all others as the chief and characteristic Victorian poet. It embodied, with noble and serene harmony, and with a then unwonted but most effective form, the newest learning, the most advanced speculative thought, the tenderest emotion, and the most intelligent religion and aspiration, of the years when it was written—and that date was the very culmination of the period, and of the ripeness of his own genius. It showed his broad, progressive studies; his innate religious mould. Tennyson was, in thought and faith, conservatively liberal—of the school of Maurice, Kingsley, and the like. English above all! English in phrase, person, knowledge of and love for outdoor nature, truth-telling, loyalty, impatience of bearing.

Above all, too, fitted to be England's laureate. In spite of my extreme Americanism and republicanism, I confess that I have never been able to comprehend why some of our most honored literary friends have deplored his acceptance of an hereditary title —have declared that it lessened either his independence or his greatness. For Tennyson was not a democrat, but a liberal conservative. He was not a republican, but a constitutional monarchist, not an American, but an Englishman. All that he was he was by birth, breeding, conviction. As a liberal yet conservative Englishman, attached to the Government of his own realm, why

should he not accept the highest mark of eminence which the realm could bestow upon him? Why should not a poet be the founder of his house, under the system to which his countrymen are loyal, as well as a soldier or a statesman? The acceptance of a title, snobbish and disloyal as it would be on the part of an American, was perfectly consistent with Tennyson's self-respect as an Englishman, a laureate and a constitutional monarchist.

He has gone in the fullness of years and glory, and the feeling of light and love that made youth beautiful for us is revived for a moment as I think of what he was, and then fades with "the days that are no more." Greater than the greatest of his generation, he outsang and outlived them all. Who of them is left to utter Bedivere's cry to Arthur?—

> But now the whole *Round Table* is dissolved,
> Which was an image of the mighty world!

Who can guess what time must pass—whether it is to be counted by decades or by centuries—before the old realm will see itself so bravely and faithfully expressed, and at its best, by a national minstrel, in enduring song?

On being asked as to his view of the matters affecting the choice of a successor to the laureateship, Mr. Stedman replied:

There is no doubt, I fancy, to whom the laurel would be given if the choice lay with the majority of the poets of our tongue and of critical judges of poetic taste. Their verdict would, I believe, give it to Algernon Swinburne. This on the score of his unparalleled lyrical gift, his talent for the quick making of heroic and supremely rhythmical odes, and the intense English feeling which underlies his work—whether it has expressed the radicalism of his earlier life, or the alleged toryism of later outgivings. But it is not unlikely that philistinism will bear against him and against the sentiment of the literary world.

William Morris is possibly the second in rank among living British poets. But, as a socialist and reformer, he might be debarred; in fact, might not care to be laureate under the existing British systems. Besides, despite his taste and learning, and his affluence as a recounter of tales which make him a kind of modern

Chaucer, he has not often sounded the lyric note which seems essential to a national celebrant.

It would be invidious to mention the names of one or two who are said to have the favor of those high in influence, and of whom neither, certainly, would make the laurel any greener than it has come from the brows of Wordsworth and Tennyson.

Recently an English author wrote to me that he thought it would be a fitting thing for an English Queen, for the third time having the appointment of a Laureate, to give the wreath to a woman. He added that Christina Rossetti, in such case, should be the one to receive it.

Now, if Mr. Swinburne is not to be chosen, why not go back to courtly traditions? Why not select the modern possessor of England's *lyra elegantiarum*, in taste and morals finer than any of the cavalier poets, and in genius, if we only realize it, equal to the best of them? Austin Dobson's art is both perfect and spontaneous; his serious measures are as good as his lighter: he touches nothing which he does not adorn, and I believe he would prove equal to important national occasions. In fact, as I long ago wrote of him, it is still hard to define his limitations, for he has not yet gone beyond them.

CHAPTER XXI

POETS OF AMERICA

So great, it will be remembered, was the labor and suffering caused by the composition of "Victorian Poets," that Mr. Stedman declared he should never again venture upon another prose work. But he could not resist either the command of his nature, or of Literature. Already in 1875, in correcting the criticism of the *Athenæum*, he wrote: "When I say that a more attractive anthology can be made up of the miscellaneous American poetry of the last fifteen years than of the same in England, I am plainly only speaking of our and their *minor* poetry (not including the elder names on either side). Our minor poets have more naturalness, and freshness and spontaneousness, than the young Neo-Pagans who imitate the Rossetti clique." And Bayard Taylor had also recognized the logic of the situation:

When Mr. Stedman says: "After a close examination of the minor poets of Britain, during the last fifteen years, I have formed, most unexpectedly, the belief that an anthology could be culled from the miscellaneous poetry of the United States, equally lasting and attractive with any selected from that of Great Britain;" and adds, shortly afterward: "I believe that the day is not far distant when the fine and sensitive lyrical feeling of America will swell into floods of creative song,"—we are tempted to regret his enforced omission of the links which connect the literary development of the two countries.

Howells, in January, 1880, had asked him for an article on Milton; Stedman's answer was:

You pay me a very high compliment, in assigning me so grand a subject—but who is so bold as to wrestle with *Milton* until after long training! When Parton asked me "What books shall I read in order to write on Voltaire?" I said—"Probably, for *your* method, you have selected them already; but if *I* were to write on

Voltaire, I should live in Europe *for ten years, and study* the history of the Eighteenth Century!" Now I—under an old contract to finish up the American Pleiades, and as an important chapter *must* be ready by March 1st—am writing from 10 P. M. to 1 A. M. nightly, and my eyes have almost given out. Add to this the most important and arduous day business I've ever had ('tis my last chance)—and you'll see I dare not engage to write more for this year.

To Henry Holt.

February 10, 1882.

No, my dear Harry, you are mistaken. My "first impulse," and that of any author who knew Gifford's fine nature and *intellect*, would be to edit his diary. It must be original and suggestive. I could make, doubtless, a tender, poetical, and instructive book of it—and it would sell: such a book as Sainte Beuve would have loved to write.

But I have calculated that if I work, on such days and nights as I can get, for two years and four months, steadily, I can finish the large prose work on which I am engaged—writing now and then a poem *en route*. To do this I have declined to prepare, among other not less notable books:

1. Bayard Taylor's Memoirs.
2. George Ripley's Memoirs.
3. An Anthology.
4. A literary encyclopedia—*$5000.* down
   and $5000. more when finished.
5. An important editorship.

Have told the parties behind all these that I should edit "nothing for nobody," until my book shall be completed.

Last night I sent to the *Century* a paper on Lowell, which has taken all my time and strength since November. Am free to-day, for the first time, and for a few days only of rest. Your letter strangely weighs down my spirits: so much that I would gladly do —so little strength and time in which to do it!

To the *writer* of the article "Mr. Longfellow," in the *Graphic*.

March 31, 1882.

As an old journalist, I know that writers have no time to read letters, and am myself as much overworked as any editor alive.

Still, I am going—for the first time in many years to write an editor concerning his article. I have not the least idea whom I address,—possibly one of my own acquaintances. Nor have I the slightest comment to make upon your literary verdicts. But a man who writes the *Graphic* leader on Longfellow, and on the whole so intelligently, is worth consideration, and I obey an impulse to mention one point on which I know you are in error, and another—which I should think you would treat differently. The latter is a question of judgment; the former, although it may seem to you of slight importance, is just one of those trifles which, through chance, may affect a man's career.

It is simply a question of *fact*. You speak of me as "a follower of the *vers de société* school in England." The elder men of what I suppose to be that school I never read (and now scarcely think worth reading) until a few years ago,—and I have written no light verse since the modern English school (Dobson, etc.,) was first heard of. All my verse of the last dozen years has been of a more serious—if you object to the word "elevated"—cast: such pieces as "The Lords-Day Gale," "Hawthorne," "Bryant," "The Discoverer," etc.,—to which I now modestly refer you. In point of *time*, Dobson and his friends are followers of me, if there is any following. In my youth I lucklessly wrote an off-hand *jeu d'esprit*, "The Diamond Wedding;" and I have written several lyrics of the type of "Pan in Wall Street," in the border-land, between fact and fantasy, which have crept into various compilations. I *never* have written a "ballade," "rondeau," "villanelle," or such like frippery, and have no taste that way. Probably the young English poets consider my New England lyrics, my "John Brown of Osawatomie," etc., as nothing beside their elaborate "art for art's sake." In conviction and habit I am their opposite extreme,—and never write poems, except spontaneously when a theme or thought possesses me.

Ten years ago I found my prose essays excited interest, and was led on to complete the "Victorian Poets." This led to a larger companion-volume on the "Rise of Poetry in America," the making of which, to my regret, has occupied my spare hours—so that I too long have deferred my return to the work that I love best. But I hope soon to be as I was—a poet—and to regain my old constituency and gain a new one. Do you know that a new generation of readers comes with every seven years? My last "collective

edition" of poems underwent a wide reading and reviewing in 1873; and it is true that a poet who stops singing so long has no right to scold you for unfamiliarity with his song. Not that you were under the least obligation to have a knowledge of it. But that I may prove what I have said, do me the favor to accept for your own shelves a copy of the "eclectic" edition which Kegan Paul brought out, not long ago, in England. It is a favorite edition with me, and may have some value in your eyes as being "rare" in America.

When the "Victorian Poets" was near completion, Mr. Dobson and his friends began to be known. I criticised the new English school severely, but its members were good-natured, and no less hospitable to me in London. Dobson's work is perfect *of its kind*, and at his great desire, I wrote a preface for his American edition, —a fact that may have influenced your statement. The latter you will, I think, see nothing in *my* book to warrant. The May *Harper's*, moreover, will contain a gossipy sketch, written long ago at the Harper's request, to illustrate some portraits of the London poets. Without this explanation, that sketch might strengthen you in your belief.

And now a brief reference to my other point. One would think your natural impulse would be to say—"Let us see what poets of a generation younger than Longfellow's can do, now that they have more occasion!" Instead of this, even the *Graphic* joins the cry of the *Independent*, etc., and says "No hope! Nothing good can come out of Nazareth." The fact is that our revered elder poets have had great longevity, and regularly supplied a market they early gained—and their poorest work has been sure of a wider reading and respect than the best of younger men. The latter have forced themselves to become novelists, essayists, etc., to have a field of their own. As to *authorship* in New York, it never has had the respect and affection here that Boston has accorded to it. True, New York gives us a market—a valuable gift, but relegates to New England and the interior the "task" of reading our works. It does not *know*, even, what we *have* done, and judges us too lightly from recent or occasional work in the magazines.

This, I say, is only a question of feeling and taste. But you remember Virgil's "*Sic vos non vobis*,"—and Hamlet tells us that "you cannot feed capons so!"

From James Davis.

April 21, 1882.

I have no excuse for not answering your kind note till now, except that my time and everything else have been used up in doing what I could not avoid doing. Moreover I have, what you will understand, for at some time you must have suffered with it, an almost unconquerable aversion from writing at all to anybody or about anything. I see in this morning's *World*, however, that sometime ago I must have felt differently, since I wrote the mortal long obituary of Darwin which is there and which I am ashamed to read lest it should show me something, or that I once was absorbed in something for which I now care very little indeed. Let me thank you for the book you sent me. I have read it—some of the poems but not all, I had already enjoyed—and will you think I am wrong in making in regard to some of the poems a criticism which I made in a general way, in the article on Mr. Longfellow, when thinking about the "choice of subjects"? I very much admire your lament on the death of Bryant, but it is for itself, and disconnected from its nominal theme, that I like it: in other words, the poem is head and shoulders above this subject—as, like enough, Milton's was, for that matter. But no matter. The article on Longfellow had to be written on the jump and at a moment's notice and I have not the slightest doubt that it contains expressions and judgments with which I myself would disagree, but in general I think it was right. In regard to yourself I now see that it was not fully fair, but in speaking of you as a follower of the *vers de société* I had not the idea of time in my mind, and was evidently engaged with fugitive verses of yours which I had read. I will take back what I said, and, indeed, had I been thinking particularly of you, I should certainly have said less—or more. After having read your book, I certainly shall sin no more: if I omit, I shall not commit, and if I commit I shall be careful not to omit. But there are so many many things in the world, and as somebody has said, if one fears to say a wrong thing or to be inconsistent, he is liable to lose his only chance of ever seeing the truth even once in his life.

I have just been reading your *Harper's* article on "Some London Poets;" do you think it is from mere whim that Mr. Lang makes light of his own poems? I think that a good many good poets—Heine among them—will do the same thing from something further down than mere whim, and that from that place further

down things which Matthew Arnold would know how to appreciate are very likely to come up. By the way, a very dear friend of mine, Homer Martin, the painter, is now in London, and is a member of the Savile Club. I envy him his chops and beer and the men who swallow them with him. It strikes me that Swinburne is about right in his estimate of Bryant's "Thanatopsis"—but why should any one expect "notes of song" from Lowell's work when his theme is that of the Commemoration Ode? And, by the way, what do you think of the "suggestive undertones" that are not wanting in Emerson's verse. I find myself, sometimes when I am walking to the office, repeating the "Problem" and "Monadnoc" and other things of his, without knowing it.

Some letters written to Mr. Stedman, or by him, during the years in which "Poets of America" was written, are of peculiar interest. It should be remembered that during these same years, Mr. Stedman was passing through a most severe financial crisis, yet there is scarcely an allusion to it.

From William Winter.

January 16, 1883.

I am glad, for *your* sake, to have written the article. No—I did not enjoy doing it. There is but one enjoyment in human life, and that is *silence:* there is but one comfort, and that is *sleep*. I get very little of either. C——— is an ingenious rascal—but also he is a fool. How could he suppose he could escape detection! I'm glad you did *not* write a critical paper for the *Overland;* and I wish that you would not write critical papers at all. Poetry is *your* field. Criticism is always Second Fiddle—usually Street Hand Organ. And since you are not *obliged* to write it, I think you might well leave that instrument to be played upon by fools (like C———) or drudges (like me). Here have I been tending a Hurdy-Gurdy all my life—from sheer poverty and compulsion. When I look back upon the years that I have been obliged thus to waste, my heart is sick, almost to despair. God help the man of letters in this country, if he be born to poverty, and the accursed man of journalism gets hold of him! Well, I can reflect, at all events, that I have done my duty, and that my pen has always been used upon the side of genius, refinement, virtue and beauty in life and in art. But I don't want to see anybody else pulver-

ized in the same mill. And I don't like to see a poet (such as you are) bothering himself to write criticism of other poets. There is only about one man in a thousand who knows what you mean by Poetry, and he needs no essays on the subject to instruct him. The rest are cattle. I need not tell you that this is said out of my old and strong friendship for you, and in no spirit of censure. The least things that you write are too good for the wretched age of mediocrity, babble and tattle in which we live. All I say is, since God made you a Poet, sing on, and let your music find its way to the hearts that can hear it.

To William Winter.

January 26, 1883.

To-day is my black-letter day. I am penned up with rheumatism, and venting my spleen by writing letters to all sorts of suckling authors who have bored me most recently with their own. To diversify this grim exercise, let me put in *one* letter, for the love of it, of a different kind—and answer to the hail across our leaden sea, of the truest and sweetest and most loyal "fellow of the craft" whom Time still spares to us. Your barque may be, as your signal shows me, overladen, laboring under monotonous skies through bitter waves, but there are many who would like to share the voyage with you—and even you and I do sometimes sing our songs in the night-watches. There is, doubtless, a kind of irony in the fate that dooms to persistent "chains and slavery" the very natures that need *and are made for* the freest, the most untethered ways of life. We both had the same early range and atmosphere, the same aspirations, in New England. We both "made our own beds" soon after—sent out with all the needs and tastes of poets and students, and with nothing to maintain them. It took me years to use myself to the cage. How I beat my head against the bars! The struggle was awful. Besides, those who begin *now* begin in different times.

I suppose you scarcely will understand it, but it is God's truth that any chance of freedom that has come to me has come so late in life that I have lost the art of finding my way out of the old network; again, it only *half*-came, a few years ago,—with all my literary plans ten years behindhand, and with half my old strength and courage worn out of me.

One thing I long since vowed to secure—the privilege of choos-

ing my own *kind* of writing, be the amount never so small. To do this, I was willing to sell groceries, and even to be called that fearful thing— "a poet-broker!" You shoot arrows to my heart, in your utterly just and righteous deprecation of my surcease of song and volubility of speech. I have whole oratories pent-up within me—am insane with the wish to try my voice again. Unfortunately, having written, in the preaching weakness of a New Englander, that "Victorian Poets" I was led to begin the companion-work which has dragged its slow length along and—with its thousand hindrances—kept me in its coils. But the Spring-time shall revive, shall it not, for both you and me? Your very letter shows the same poet's heart—you keep it green—you throb with sensibility—a quality unknown to the younger brood of *artizans*, for such in truth they are. I say nothing of your unique and pre-eminent position as a dramatic critic, for I know all that is nothing to you—a poet. But so long as such a nature as yours is near me, and still "in the form," I shall feel that life is worth living, and that your best utterances and my own are still to be heard.

And you may be sure that I am always, with all honor and friendship, most affectionately yours. . . .

To T. B. Aldrich.

April 10, 1883.

I have heard a good deal about the Emerson article, pro and con, but am more pleased with your taking the pains to look at it—and sending me a word about it—than with all the rest together. The fact is that I have grown very fond of you, Tom, in the past five years: our ideas and hearts seem to have *neared* as we both have grown older. I wish we lived nearer each other—it would do us both good in many ways,—and some other people too, I fancy.

I suspect, from the raw weather here, that your Mistress, the Spring, failed to keep her assignation? She has jilted *me* most abominably, and I have suffered, and still suffer, all the horrors of rheumatic gout and neuralgia in the clutches of her rival. For a month or more I've been really ill, and mostly in the house. Have managed to write a long and rather pretty "Comment" as an introduction for Dorê's designs for "The Raven" (a Fall *Harper-book*). The winter somewhat frittered away with all sorts of "movements," such as the Authors Club. By the way, *that* had a very crowded meeting at 71 West Fifty-fourth Street, and I

reproached myself for not having coaxed you down for a day or two. But I am seriously thinking of getting *out* of New York. The very labor of *declining* to take part in all the Clubs, Dinners, Testimonials, etc., which busy-bodies like ——— and ——— and ———, are devising, spoil half one's working time. For years I have hoped that New York would take an interest in books. It is suddenly the *fashion* to do so: Readings, Private Theatricals, Essays, Debates, etc., are the Murray Hill amusements. It is all very well, and in ten years will lead to something, but a professional author, amidst it all, feels like an artist among chromotypes. There are two special nuisances which, if I could get time, I would touch up in some place like your Contributors' Club. 1. The coolness with which editors of papers like the *Critic* and the *Literary World* demand "Centennial," and "birthday," letters, etc., from busy authors. I say "No" every time. 2. The demands made by self-advertising clubs for your presence and remarks whenever they can capture a famous guest.

Neither you nor I can gain any permanent advantage except from the equivalent amount of good work that we turn out—i. e. of the work for which we have a special gift. I am jealous even of the *Atlantic*, if your labors there are going to prevent you from writing more of your imaginative prose and verse. . . .

The Britons are evidently suffering tortures over the spread of popularity of Yankee literature. Britons are curiously interchanging—*they* are the sensitive ones, we are so no longer. The sceptre is departing from Judah. I should really think they'd get tired of the same old sneering essays, pedantic criticism, "University" leaders, in their *Athenæums* and *Saturday Reviews*. The English press is hopelessly insular and provincial.

But I am talking too long, alone in my office, after a day's work. Shall travel nowhere this season, except with you from Ponkapog to Pesth.

"I am reading your article on Emerson in proof," wrote Edmund Gosse, "and very admirable it is,—one of your best essays. And, oddly enough, although all the world has been mouthing out words on this man lately, the real fact about his poetry has been left for you to say, in your leisurely way, when the time came for you to say it. His poetry has always been very little understood."

To W. D. Howells. October 8, 1883
(which, by the way, is my
50th Birthday).

Come, my pay certainly has been raised. Besides "so much a page," I am getting, *mirabile dictu!*, two letters from you for one *Century* article. All things "are going otherwise," as Daphnis says. I should have known, however, that you would read anything I might write on your poet of poets: I well remember that he was your first and last love, how much in sympathy you two were in your tastes and studies, and what a paper you wrote on him—I think in the *North American Review?*—As for remembering you as a poet: 'tis only by your reiterative and, truth to say, incremental persistence that you have made me think of you except as a poet, scholar, essayist. These you were born; the novelist came out of you, like the Testamental spirits, by prayer and fasting,—a resultant of your determination to express yourself (as is both wise and right) after the creative usage of the age.

But, with respect to Longfellow. You will own, I think, that I have followed closely upon his income and outcome, with some life-long knowledge of my subject; and you have seen between the lines, I am sure, that I write of him with a personal *affection* felt for no other poet. He charmed my boyhood so, that 'tis hard indeed for me to judge what of his verse is weak—what lasting. The gist of my whole paper was in the sentence comparing him to an umbilical cord, nurturing us with the old-world current of beauty till we could get our sustenance at home. Probably you and I are not far apart, after all, in our affectionate reverence for Longfellow, and in our estimate of him, especially as an artist. While obliged to recognize the hard fact that *every one* of his notable poems and lyrics reflects somebody else's poem or lyric, I do find his originality in the equal fact that he always sings in "Longfellowese"—his *tone* was new, unmistakable, always utterly his own. As for reverence, you and I used to have more for our elders than the youngsters now exhibit—did we not? If Poetry were not in strict retirement at present, *She* would laugh to scorn what I term their Kensington-stitch verse, and mock at their irreverent conceits.

I was glad you had a good word for Thompson. He is, at least, natural, spontaneous—as very few are, nowadays. By the way,

I have written one or two little things myself, of late: perhaps you may like one, "The Old Picture Dealer," which will be in the December *Manhattan*—and I have just sent a little dramatic lyric to T. B. A. for the December *Atlantic*.

My heart warms whenever I think of Tom. *He* certainly was a born troubadour, so blithe and full of music; and our long comradeship has grown very close and strong of late years—though I grow grizzlier, and he outrageously younger, every year.

You see I am writing from 30th St. We have just got down here, back in Bohemia again (reclamation of citizenship) after some years dalliance with Philistinism and what Horace calls the "Persian apparatus." One of our regrets at leaving our beautiful home (we have rented it) is that during all our Olympiad there you never came to see how nice it was.

While I am chatting on, let me add that friends have secured for us our New Castle house by the sea. As you are in New England again, we doubtless shall confabulate next Summer.

Herr Boott's music has come. The stanzas were called *by me* "Song from a Drama." The composers have had a *mania* for setting them to music. I have six arrángements now—by Buck, Korbay, Christiani, Bendelari, Murphy—and this one by Boott. Of course Herr B. didn't ask leave—why need he? 'Twould be contrary to all precedent. His air is quite melodious, and very simple, two good qualities. All my *songs* have been picked up by composers—for some reason they go well to music.

Cable was here, and says his "Dr. Sevier" is ahead of anything he has done. If Hay didn't write "The Bread-Winners," the d---l did.

"I want to tell you," wrote Gosse, "how very admirable I think your Longfellow,—an estimate certainly far and away superior to any previous one, and just to the extremity of critical gentleness. I read it with extreme pleasure."

To Edmund Gosse.

December 13, 1883.

You don't know how much I was gratified,—since I haven't been able to write and tell you,—by the few lines which you sent me relative to the paper on Longfellow. There is no man in England whose critical opinion, all things considered, I value more than

yours. I do not except Matthew Arnold's,—for his is sure to be Arnoldish, if you know what I mean by that: it is apt to be eccentric, too *subjective*, and urged with a subtility and adroit style that often makes one forget his own canons in admiration of that critic's personality. But I have steadily noted your critical and prose method, and your rules of judgment, and don't—as I say —know any one whose opinion is more worth having, upon any matter of taste or scholarship, or who expresses it in better English.

And I was touched with the kindness that made you send me a word of approval at just this time.

Since the note came I have been writing pretty hard for "ready money," while settling up my affairs,—and so busy also with the latter lugubrious business that I have not found a chance to write you a word.

What is all this about Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.? A London letter, to a Boston paper, has a column of gossip about their ways of getting rich at the expense of their authors,—who are said to receive no copyrights, etc. The *occasion* of the letter is the withdrawal of Tennyson. The house treated me with so much courtesy, in venturing to print my book, that I was sorry to see that letter. But the whole business of publishing is one of demoralization. Publishers, *above all things* hate to pay *authors* any profit; they only do it under compulsion. This confuses their sense of right and wrong, and they cheat, undermine, and suspect one another. The same atmosphere pervades only one other trade—that of the patent houses: *they* confuse their moral sense by robbing helpless *inventors*,—and then go on and rob one another.

The richest publishers and patent-men are always the most unscrupulous, however generous socially and liberal to their employees.

The Harpers are delighted with your long and interesting Doré-Poe review in the *Saturday R.* As for me, what shall I say? I knew how tame many of those drawings were. You have kindly picked out for approval the very ones, and only ones, which are good and striking "Dorés," and you are more than kind and just to me.

My dear Gosse, you are a loyal fellow with a firm hand and a good memory. I think there are some years of work in me yet—am in better health than ever before—and I hope to live long enough to show you that I, too, am *haud immemor.*

I must write Dobson, lucky fellow, this week, *in re* his "lovely" (as we Yengeese say) edition of "Old World Idylls." Mrs. Stedman prays to be remembered to you. We have rented her house, and are living on the income, etc., in cozy Bohemian quarters at the address of this letter. Our people like Irving's Louis XIth, Lyons Mail, etc., but do *not* accept his Hamlet. They think him the best stage-*artist* and *manager* ever known. They think Arnold's criticism of Emerson altogether too narrow and *literary*. Is not Arnold making an *ad captandum* point of shrewdness in coining so many new words—"remnant," "lubricity," etc.? Is it not getting to be almost a trick, or trade-mark?

To F. S. Saltus.

January 5, 1884.

Did you ever find yourself apparently with ten lobes to your brain, instead of two, all working in different directions (like the mules of an army-team) upon as many different works and duties —all requiring attention at once? And at such a time, were you also half-broken down with prolonged strain and consequent nervous exhaustion? I hope not, for I can assure you that in such states molehills seem (lunar) mountains, and the least new engagement—that otherwise would be a delight—is an unspeakable terror. Even the effort to explain why it can't be met drives another nail in one's coffin.

. . . . . .

It is a fine thing to have the nerve to take up some sustained and noble work of love, like that you tell me you have in hand, and to pursue it steadfastly and quietly, in the scholarly artist-way, to the full and end. I *can't* write a Sonnet to Donizetti, off-hand, though I do love melody—and he *was* a melodist—and though I have a heart full of associations connected with Lucia and Lucrezia, etc. And I am absolutely wild with unfulfilled work —my writing engagements all behindhand, and every particle of strength in demand during my present "crisis." Even my letters are weeks unwritten, and yet you see I answer you first of all and am letting my pen run on. That is because you are a fellow-poet, and there are none too many nowadays,—our wares being out of fashion. So we ought to confabulate together now and then.

To Henry C. Bowen.

January 4, 1885.

Did you ever read the classical fable of Tantalus? Here, for over a month, I have had your beautiful cheque for $100., enclosed in one of your kindest annual letters, lying on my table,—aggravating me beyond measure because *I dared not use it!* And here I am compelled to send it back to you, simply because no poem has "come to me" in the interval—which I would be willing to give you in exchange. You know I never have disappointed you before; and, in fact, I *never* was so pinched for money as at this very moment. But I am laboring under pressure, every night, to complete a big book which I have promised Mr. Houghton shall be ready in the Spring—a prose work—and *my* poetry will not come to order when the brain is wearied with prose. Forgive me this once, and accept my wishes for a Happy and successful New Year.

From T. B. Aldrich.

January 30, 1885.

I think your paper on Holmes one of the very best of the series —it is full of insight and just criticism. The few points to which I take exception are points of no importance.—I had begun to write this when the *Tribune* came to me. That's an odd summing up of your essay. The last *Atlantic* catches it, too. Julian Hawthorne himself couldn't have turned out a funnier paragraph. Higginson's review *was* severe, but every word of it was deserved. —I think you are right about Holmes being in and out of fashion. His lyrics were at first very popular; then there came a time—between 1847 and 1857—when his bright work was rather overshadowed by a different kind—that of Longfellow and Whittier. The poems in the "Autocrat" brought H. to the front again. After a while he lost ground, it seems to me. He wrote too many class-day verses: they had an instant, local success, but they belonged, as our friend Henry James would say, to the parochial school of poetry. The verse that pleases merely a set doesn't last like the verse that impresses a solitary reader here and there. Strictly speaking . . . Holmes's poems are not as popular to-day as they were ten years ago. Nothing is forgotten so quickly as the stanza that makes us laugh and nothing is remembered so long as the stanza that makes us *think* or makes us *feel*. Holmes has written very few of the latter sort. Those few are nearly perfect, but they don't appeal to his *general* audience. I can't imagine how he will

stand by and by. At present his *personality* is a tower of strength. How men—most men—shrink after death! What I like in your paper is its grave candor and the good sense which justifies it.

To T. B. Aldrich.

February 30, 1885.

Your letter did me an extraordinary amount of service on Saturday. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, as it came in at breakfast—just in time to put me in better humor with myself for the day. The fact is that I had begun to think myself unable to state my meaning in good English—since my Holmes criticism appeared to be so thoroughly *misunderstood* in the *Tribune;* and that, too, by a writer who evidently was friendly enough to *me*. On reflection, I see that he, or she, must be a layman—not a poet; otherwise what I wrote of the good Doctor *as a poet*, would not be construed into a statement of his character as a man. When I said he had been "in and out of vogue," of course I chiefly referred to his verse—and to the form of his verse. These *have* been "old-fashioned," and he has gloried in the fact! Just now the Dobson-Gosse "revivalists" have awakened a factitious interest in old-style heroics, and the measures of Gay and Swift, etc., etc. But there is a heap of sound and condensed criticism in your letter. In writing of Holmes's poetry, I *had* to tell the truth about it,—it will not stand Taine's test of "durability"; that is, the mass of it will not. I was careful to say that his scientific *ideas*, twenty years ago, were in advance of the time. You are right in going beyond me, and pointing out that, as a general man of letters, he was very much out of sight during the ten years preceding the "Autocrat." And certainly, when all were reading Longfellow's romance-verse, people did not think Holmes's rhymed-addresses and comic "Spectre Pigs" of great poetic value.

Critics do the Doctor an ill turn, in picking out all they can find against his genius in my paper, and ignoring my hearty and sympathetic tribute to his zest, wit, originality, and frequent lyrical beauty. And of course, by this time, he has convinced himself that my point of view is unfriendly.

To John Worthington.

February 12, 1885.

Your recent letter to *me*, of September 16, '84, has been on my table—pleading for a reply—ever since it came. In my overworked

and time-mortgaged condition it has affected me as H. Clapp, Jr., was affected by Brisbane's glass eye, which B. left on the mantel-piece to watch Clapp while the employer was absent. I love you, John, but am compelled to treat you as shamefully as I treat all other friends,—and consequently expect you, ere long, to drop off like the others. . . . Were it not for my debts (of honor only) I would go *somewhere*, live on oatmeal, be poor and content—so that I might *rest*. . . .

From John G. Whittier.

5th Mo. 11, 1885.

In reading thy very generous paper in the *Century*, I think I felt very much as the man did when returning from town meeting after being elected Selectman. "It can't be me that's a Selectman," he said, "I must be somebody else and I don't believe my dog will know me."

I wish I felt that I deserved all the good words said of me in thy article; but at any rate, I am heartily grateful for them. I value especially what is said of me personally, of the man aside from his verses, though I can only claim that the portrait of me is rather what I have wished to be than what I am. At my age and from my present outlook, the love and good will of my friends and neighbors are more to me than fame as a writer.

With sincere thanks for a tribute which any man might well be proud of I am gratefully thy friend. . . .

To John G. Whittier.

June 2, 1885.

When a man writes an article, in the least critical, concerning a leader of his craft—whom he cherishes with the love and honor which you know I entertain for you—he feels as if he were laying hands upon the Ark of the Covenant. He scarcely knows what will happen. You can understand then, that I am profoundly grateful for your letter of the 11th of May. My papers on the elder poets, written as they are for a large volume soon to appear—the "Poets of America"—are necessarily critical. I trust they will be thought appreciative and sympathetic. To write of you was with me a labor of love. No one can ever usurp your place in the hearts of the American people. This I tried to express, and all my little talk about technical matters seemed to me of minor importance.

If technics have to be insisted upon, in the case of bardlings, it is equally true that the strong and noble messengers of song, who have *something to deliver*, have little need to observe them. Victor Hugo was a case in point.

Another green and beautiful Summer is with you in New England. May you live in good health, and enjoy it to the full. I am always, with great affection and respect. . . .

To Miss ———

July 22, 1885.

During the past few years life here,—my life, at all events,—has been a kind of dumb brutish misery. This afternoon a waft of cooler air suggests hope, and I have energy enough to write you a letter. One can peg away at gambling or editing in any weather,—but any letter on a subject near his heart he will dodge as long as possible. When I say my say, I shall feel a "concern" off my mind and not before.

You know, perhaps, that there comes a time just before the completion of any prolonged or important work or enterprise, when it all seems worthless to the one executing it: a great depression, a sense of time and energy wasted—a feeling that the whole thing has been a mistake and not worth doing.

I am in just that state of mind concerning the solid book I have been writing for five years—begun as a complement to the "Victorian Poets," and persisted in because I am dogged and *will* fight a battle through. It is much larger than the "Victorian Poets," and its synthetic plan and purpose will not be understood until you see the perfected volume. It has been written, one might say, "with blood and tears"—certainly, with piles of other work and under a load of disasters, it has helped to make me *old*. I long since got tired of it, but *have* finished it—and all my work hereafter will seem light and easy.

And now it all seems labor thrown away. Poetry is out of fashion; the wings of the oriole trail in the dust; verse is degraded to the vile uses of the *Tribune* 5th column; good poets are ashamed of their gift—you among the rest. My long work is done, and it seems to me, for all human interest, I might just as well have written a book on the second aorist, or the art of crocheting.

To this feeling I must accuse you of contributing largely. I have grown to respect your judgment—to sympathize with your

tastes—to distrust my own estimate when differing from yours. We both have a contempt for anything second-rate, didactic, sentimental.

Do you know that you have paid me a very poor compliment? You were pleased, and justly, when Mr. Dana appreciated your poetry and placed two of your lyrics in his book. You are ashamed to figure in my book.

I could forgive this, if your solicitude had begun after the appearance of that *wretched* item in the ignorant, blundering *Critic* of Saturday. I don't wonder that, with your high standard, and your view of the scrambling, pushing, inferior writers, you should dread to be classed with the "bardlings" in a "flutter," etc. That item made me writhe all over. I have *not* written any paper "criticising" my juniors. I have simply made a rapid summary of statement of *what they have done*—as a basis for speculation on the outlook, the chances of a poetic revival, etc.,—and have shown how our ideal energy is diverted to other outlets. When you see my book, you will understand that this chapter is absolutely essential to it. I was about to submit it to *you* for advice, and also my Preface, when I learned you were leaving town.

But I cannot forgive you, since you entertained the same wish, and made the same request of me, months ago.

Every man has one work, or one point of determination, which he does not surrender for *anybody*. Your request, profoundly as I admire and love you, had no more weight with me then, and has no more now, than if it had been made by an utter stranger. I was compelled to mention you in my summary, and did so with perfect *sang froid;* the plates are cast—and there is an end of it. I have tried to write with reserve, tact, bold scientific honesty, and as to this one book have not considered whether I should make or unmake friends.

But, my dear friend, without saying more of the low estimate you put on my work, and while I share your view of the petty notorieties that swarm like midges in the air, do not entirely give up your youthful ideal—and do not grow too cynical. The following paragraph I copy from my closing review: "Do not the poets share in the sentiment which regards ideality as an amiable weakness, the relic of a Quixotic period, and thus feel ashamed of their birthrights." Certainly to one of the best of them this paragraph applies.

From T. B. Aldrich.

September 4, 1885.

If you live to be two hundred years old—and I should like to catch you at it!—you will not find a more difficult task than the one which you set yourself in the September *Century*, nor be able to accomplish it more skillfully. I wonder how you dared to handle such a lot of exposed poetic nerves! Yet you touched each with such inspired tact that I can't imagine a single quiver in the whole bunch. With regard to the passage which you so kindly devoted to me, I shall say to you what I said to a photographer yesterday—"Am I as good-looking as all that?" One generally goes down to the grave without any very accurate idea of one's own profile. "The Twilight of the Poets"—the title by itself is worth $50.—must have cost you immense labor. How on earth did you get all those people together! Three or four of them were total strangers to me and to a wise man here who supposed that he knew everybody. It is a notable paper, and if it errs anywhere it errs on the side of geniality—wisely, perhaps. . . . What you say about over-elaboration is admirable. That is *bad* technique. The things that have come down to us, the things that have *lasted*, are *perfect in form*. I believe that many a fine thought has perished, being inadequately expressed, and I know that many a light fancy is immortal because of its perfect wording. Moreover, I have a theory that *poor material* is incapable of the highest finish. You can't make even statuettes out of butter.

To J. R. G. Hassard.

September 18, 1885.

Having just finished "wrestling" with a portentous topical Index, and thereby having been enabled to write THE END on the last page of a book that has taken all my spare time for five years, I can break off gradually from the desk—as from the opium habit—and in no better way than by writing a few letters to friends whom I have long neglected. We have often contrasted your lot with ours, this working-day Summer; and have been honestly glad that you have had blue sky and green firs and cool waters to look at, instead of our cat-infested back-yard. On the whole, nothing has refreshed me more than one of your fishing letters—so brisk a transcript of many a day when *et ego* was an Arcadian. I always felt that you were a trout-fisherman by nature. Indeed,

I fully expected to get away for a week, visit your hermitage, and have you guide me to some of your spring-holes; but *Dis aliter visum*—as Browning says. For eleven months I have not slept out of this sordid town. My one holiday was the first day of the yacht-races. I did see that wondrous flotilla that followed the Puritan and Genesta out to sea; was on a steam-tug that took the whole course. It was something to remember.

We couldn't let our 54th Street house, and *had* to let the country place. But, anyhow, the constant labor requisite to get my book ready this Fall—500 pages written over *three* times, etc.—would have kept *me* here. And now the work is ended, and I feel the despondency that probably most people feel at the end of a job that can be conceived in an hour but that requires years for accomplishment. The question *will* arise whether it is not all a waste of life—whether anything long and broad and "serious" is worth doing. Well: it is my last prose work of the kind. If it hasn't taken all the poetry out of me, I hope still to sing a few songs—out of fashion as poetry is (real poetry) in these days when as, Oscar would say, we are under the tyranny of the analytic novel.

. . . By the way, there is a critical paragraph in to-day's *Tribune* on a paper of mine in the *Century*, "The Twilight of the Poets." As a critic, I get plenty of criticism, and can't object to it. But, with the exception of you, I scarcely know a *newspaper*-critic who looks at more than one or two passages of the thing reviewed —who even tries to comprehend the *synthetic* design and purpose of my work, important or unimportant. There is a review "Gustave Doré," in the *Tribune*, written in such direct, compact English, and so *well-proportioned*, that I suspect you wrote it. If you wrote the paragraph on the "Twilight," you certainly fell into a "labored" style unlike your own. It totally ignores, moreover, the important part of my paper—in which I subjected recent verse to the severest kind of an overhauling, and *did* lay down the canons of true poetry as strongly as possible. If possible, I gladly would have avoided mentioning a single minor poet,—but could not otherwise complete my book, any more than a church can be completed without entrance and exit,—nor get a basis for my subsequent remarks. But I began by saying that the list of poets named was purely *un*critical—they would be presented at their *best*, in order to show that the whole throng amounted to

very little. Hurried newspaper-writers, of course, look curiously to see what is said about contemporaries, just as we gossip at a party, and utterly avoid the rest of such an article. The same plan, exactly, was followed (and *approved*) in the "Victorian Poets"—a rapid *summary* was inserted of the minor school, even to the balladists of the Dublin *Nation*—and was necessary to the plan of the work.

But what right have I to bore you with all this! The machine, you see, will go on working—because so long at work—though the day's work is ended.

I am taking some content in the thought that the coming season, and hereafter, I *can* enjoy my friends again, read a book, go to the theatre, try to make back some of my losses—in short, be free to do as other men do, and live like a Christian. So I do hope you will be able to pass some of the season in town, and that we and our wives may enjoy some things together, as of old. Mrs. Laura unites with me in the kindest remembrances to your Diana—whose arrows of the chase reached our hearts years ago; and I am always, my dear Hassard. . . .

To Hamilton W. Mabie.

September 20, 1885.

You have the synthetic view of the logical writer, and—being an author—you know, without my repeating it, that an author is grateful to any critic who will take note of his major purpose, rather than of matters which are minor and auxiliary. I am greatly indebted to you for putting so succinctly the main arguments of my recent paper, and for reinforcing them with others, of your own, from which I gather new food for thought.

Human nature is so constituted that the ordinary newspaper critic, in spite of my request to the contrary, cares for nothing in such an article but the brief comment upon *people* which merely serves as its text. He, like his readers, merely is curious to see what is said about his neighbor. I underwent a severe ordeal in having to mention names of recent poets at all—it was absolutely necessary to complete a work which in its opening chapters treats of the minor poets of other days. In the book itself, which will come out next month, the few pages occupied by these younger poets will seem relatively unimportant—50 pages to Emerson—3 lines to Miss or Mr.———. I have severely criticized our con-

temporaries, *en masse*. But if anybody expects me to break flies on a wheel (my fellow-flies, too!) he doubtless has been disappointed.

After all, one needs a strong topic to write strongly. My best work always is when I have a subject that requires "tackling"—Emerson, Poe, Tennyson, etc. Don't you have the same experience? . . .

To T. B. Aldrich.

September 29, 1885.

I've been itching to write you, for a fortnight, but have been obliged to let the *want-to's* give way to the *must be's*. Your letter has some golden bits of criticism in it—that about the impossibility of giving high finish to poor material, for example—I shall put it in a safe place, for reference. We are quite in accord as to the *elements* of our art. I am obliged, too, for your careful reading of "The Twilight of the Poets" and regard for its main design. *I* think the *title* rather happy. All the same, I am perfectly aware that, to the "average newspaper critic," the few pages mentioning a hundred poets and poetlings seemed quite as inconsequential to the *title* as A. Ward's lecture on the "Babes in the Wood" (to whom it did not refer at all—). The A. N. C. is so constituted, and so hurried, that, despite my injunction that the paper must be read *in toto* or not at all—and the common reader is so much interested in gossip about *persons*,—that the article has been considered merely with regard to the individuals named in it. This I foresaw, expected; it was inevitable—a cup, as you know, I fain would have passed by me, but that could not be avoided. When the volume, of 500 pages, is seen to have but five or six pages occupied in this way, the latter would fall into their right relation to the whole structure. If not, it will be because some jealous and carping fellow, like S——— in certain moods, strives—for purposes of his own—to give those pages undue importance, as he has already in two of his newspapers.

I know how inadequate my treatment of the few important names, younger than myself, had to be. I resolved to do what justice I could to *you*, and two or three others, in the brief space available, at the outset. Next, to criticize somewhat carefully the dead Lanier, and indicate the mistake that so twisted his genius. Finally, to say the best I could for each *poetlet* named,

by way of giving him or her a chance to do better,—and then to show the feebleness of the whole set *collectively*. It is thought, of course, that I have named too many. I might have named five times as many. A few names, of small account, I put in—simply the names—as a concession to life-long friendship, such as Shurtleff's, for instance. Then the *relative* attention should be borne in mind—if I give *50 pages* to Longfellow, I certainly have a right to give *two words* to Robert Weekes, or Miss Cone (the latter, by the way, is likely to have a future?). (I see Miss Hutchinson says your last month's verse is *mediocre*, and that R. H. S. praises it highly.) Now the same plan was followed in the "Victorian Poets," and no one objected, because no one here was interested in the minor English poets as *persons*. I even named the Irish rhymsters on the Dublin *Nation*, and the Chartist songsters, as representing certain phases. On the whole, I am quite satisfied with myself for not breaking butterflies on a wheel, inasmuch as I have objected to them collectively. And, having noticed Stoddard, Boker, etc., in a former article, I would not let the book go into binding and existence without some permanent tribute to you—my longest and most valued comrade.

The statistical qualities of this book and the "Victorian Poets" are the utilities needed to prolong their existence. Volumes made up of the long and "high-standard" chapters on the famous poets would have a more select tone at first, but would not live ten years, as the "Victorian Poets" has done.

Well, henceforth I shall be a freer man, and, I hope, a better companion. No more big prose books for me! This has been written over several times, and represents *work* equal to four or five novels.

One or two details. You are thoroughly right as to Wilstach, who sent me various letters—his Virgil, etc. My references to him in the *book* differ, you will see, from that in the article.

As to "Songs of Summer": there *we* shall always differ. Many of those poems were in *Putnam's*, and among the first to initiate the movement here in *poetry for poetry's sake*. It set in from the time R. H. S., B. T., and a few others began to write. "Songs of Summer," for that time, 1855, was a notable book, with all its shortcomings. Its author has written more hack-verse, of late, than poverty furnishes any excuse for, but I could make up an impressive selection from the total product of his singing and

sinning life. I don't think he takes my printed opinion of your gift and work very satisfiedly.

You have brought all this talk about my own work, etc., upon yourself, by your interesting letter.

Yes, I do think, and have intimated, that the elder poets you name long since fulfilled their mission. They have done more: they have kept others out of the ministry.

"Poets of America" was published in the Fall of 1885. From the Introduction we quote:

First I would reproduce a statement made in the Preface to the former work, viz.,—that the author originally had undertaken to write upon the poets of this country and the causes of their successes and failures; that on examination he had found modern and radical changes in the conditions affecting ideal effort, at home and abroad: that for this and other reasons he could "more freely and graciously begin by choosing a foreign paradigm than by entering upon the home-field, and that none could be so good for the purpose as the poetry of Great Britain." It seemed to him, also, that, until after some training of this kind, "affection, reverence, national feeling, or some less worthy emotion, might be thought to prevent an American from writing without prejudice" of the poets of his own country. Certainly he could attempt this more profitably when the changes mentioned should be more complete, and the careers more rounded of the chief American writers who would pass under review.

The time came when I felt emboldened to renew my original undertaking, and the result is set forth in this volume. My belief is strengthened that the earlier treatise was essential to it, and, in fact, the most expedient preliminary task that could be chosen. The modern conditions, as far as they relate to both countries, could be observed more directly in England than in America, their stress being there of earlier origin and less diffused. My previous synopsis of them now has only to be condensed, and supplemented by discussion of those other conditions that are peculiar to this country alone. Furthermore, I regard the treatise on British poetry as of less significance, in its field of observation, than the work now following it; and I trust that reasons for this opinion—to which some at first may demur—will become apparent to those who give more than a cursory reading to these essays. Even now

few Americans set a proper value on the relative bearing of our ideal and intellectual progress thus far. The instinctive deference of a young nation to its elders, and the frequent assurance of the latter that our progress has been restricted chiefly to physical achievement, have united until a recent date to make us accept that view of the matter. Æsop's lion discovered that the honors of a contest depend largely upon the sculptor that commemorates it. If there were a stake-boat, a winning-post, by which the comparative import (waiving the question of inherent value) of national activities could be measured exactly, various estimates might be disestablished. What is of most concern, in relation to the *theme* of this work, is the fact that the literature—even the poetic literature—of no country, during the last half-century, is of greater interest to the philosophical student, with respect to its bearing on the future, than that of the United States. My judgment is to this effect, after years in which I have read a good deal of native and foreign comment upon the subject. The reasons for it are generally perceptible in the ensuing chapters, but three may be stated here succinctly: 1. American poetry, more than that of England during the period considered, has idealized—often inspired—the national sentiment, the historic movements, of the land whose writers have composed it. 2. This nation already,—in the second century of a growth which began not in barbarism, but in political civilization,—is gaining in strength, population, and the liberal arts, at an accelerative speed that soon must make it a typical exemplar of ideal as well as material production. Nor can there be a time when the bent of its ideality will be more suggestive than now, for the present angle determines the arc of the future. 3. The first true course of American poetry has distinguished the principal term covered in these essays; a first heat has been run during that time, to whose leaders special chapters are devoted. It is rare that an epoch definitely so begun and ended can be selected as the object of synthetic examination. The reader is invited to study a period as distinct in literature as our Constitutional period in politics, or the Thirty Years' War in history; one, moreover, in which poetry bore closer relations to the life and enthusiasm of a people than it often has borne in other lands and times.

We see, also, that this term has been singularly concurrent with that of the Victorian hemicycle, so that an examination of the

poetry of our English tongue for the last fifty years is compassed in my two books. In order to perceive the evolution of a new minstrelsy from its foreign and native germ, the opening chapters of this volume are occupied partly with the efforts of the Colonial verse-writers and their immediate successors. A final chapter contains a rapid summary of what is now doing, as a basis for speculation on the outlook and the chances of a revival in the future. The reader thus obtains a general view of American poets and poetry from their outset to the present date.

The twelve Chapter-Headings are: Early and Recent Conditions; Growth of the American School; Bryant; Whittier; Emerson; Longfellow; Poe; Holmes; Lowell; Whitman; Taylor; The Outlook. These chapters, in a more or less completed form, had been previously published; the references to them in foregoing pages relate to these earlier detached essays. So soon as May, 1886, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published a noteworthy review by Madame Blanc (Th. Bentzon) of thirty-five pages. Immediately Stedman wrote this letter:

To Madame Blanc.

July 17, 1886.

There is no other person of whom I have reason to think so kindly, just now, as of Th. Bentzon. Instead of praying you to forgive my boldness in addressing you, I deem it my first duty to acquit myself of a seeming ingratitude—in that I have not, ere this, conveyed to you my homage and most sincere thanks. For you not only have been my friendly critic, but my best physician. While prostrated with illness, the result of overwork, I learned from our American journals something of the elegant and exhaustive review with which you have honored my "Poets of America." You may be sure that, as soon as permitted, I made haste to read this critical *précis*—executed with the fine and compact art whose secret is known only to the French, and of which your mastery is so inimitable. The pleasure thus afforded me, and my hearty sense of the high honor and value of such an introduction at your hands, did more for my convalescence than any conceivable prescription—short of a fresh voyage to France and the privilege, which I long have desired, of meeting you in person.

No American author, whatever his standing, undervalues the worth to him of recognition in the pages of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. No American author, if empowered to choose his own sponsor, but would name first the lady whose clear and self-reliant thought, and wide literary explorations, have given the *Revue* in our time a new claim to the strict interpretation of its title. We know Th. Bentzon very well indeed, on this side of the ocean. To articles signed with that name we are indebted for the most sympathetic and judicial comprehension which our imaginative writers have received abroad. Your paper on *Les Poètes Américains* owes to its authorship, then, no less than to its subject, the wide notice which it has attracted from our leading newspapers and journals. This transatlantic world, which you know so well, long since learned to know you in turn. Should you ever visit the United States (and that you should seems to me in accordance with the "fitness of things") you will find that in changing your skies you have not got beyond the limits of your *home*.

You have alluded to the rigidity of French opinion; and, in truth, foreigners sometimes complain that the "children of light" in Paris regard the art and letters of other regions with an indifference that savors of provincialism. But, as all roads lead to Paris, I do not look upon this indifference as strange. Probably the outsiders thought Eden provincial, but Adam and Eve doubtless did not trouble themselves much on that account! And when a French writer does busy himself with an extraneous study, his criticism is far more catholic and penetrative than that which comes from English sources. Besides, your literature has taken a very wide outlook of late years—and well it may, with such hands as yours to direct and adjust its field-glass. But I see that I am expressing in a halting way (my illness being of the head and not of the heart), my gratitude for your generous offices to my latest work. I am not such an egotist as to be unaware that you are

"to my virtues very kind,
And to my faults a little blind."

Nevertheless, a letter which comes from my clever young friend and protêgê, Mr. Harry Harland, emboldens me to ask a new favor of you. I have been saving, for a present to some very near and valued friend, the last of "100 copies only" of an *edition de luxe* of my "Songs and Ballads," privately printed by the Book-

fellow's Club. It plainly was destined for you from the first! Do me the great honor to accept it as a pledge of my homage and esteem. The Japanese paper you will admire—the drawings, except one stolen from Bida, I fear you will laugh at—as for the poems, I have a foolish affection for some of them, since they are what poor Heine called "the songs of the days of my youth."

Henry Harland, June 24, 1886, had written Stedman:

Perhaps it may interest you to know that day before yesterday I called upon Madame Blanc (Th. Bentzon)—was introduced to her by one of her intimate lady friends, a relative of Aline's. She was very cordial and interesting, especially so when I told her that I knew you. She made me extemporize your biography, describe your appearance, etc., till I had exhausted my stock of knowledge. She regretted so much that she had not met you when you were in France, and wondered whether you would be coming this way soon again. She said that what impressed her particularly in the "Poets of America" was not merely its breadth, justice, beauty of style, etc., but its marvellous *depths* of penetration. She knew of no other living critic who got so near to the innermost heart of the truth. She is acquainted with your poetry also, and repeated the first verse of the "Ballad of Lager Bier."

Another fact that may seem still more suggestive was the thirty-one page article in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1886, on American poets, not only based upon, but accepting, practically, the conclusions reached in "Poets of America." The reviewer finishes with these words:

Like all modern versifiers, American poets of the cultured school are characterized by scholarly refinement of thought, command of dainty fancies, and mastery of the technicalities of their art. As the special birthright of their nation, they possess fluency of language, genius for effective illustrations, and power of condensing thought into portable epigrammatic shape. Their native nimbleness of mind enables them to approach their subjects from many different points of view, each of which suggests a profusion of novel associations. It is this power that imparts to their verse the charm of freshness. Their poetry has the transparent brilliancy, the sparkle, and the sharp outline of cut glass. But it is vitreous,

not opaline. There is little depth of light and shade, no flesh-tints, no broad, massive effects of colour. This class of American poetry, as the abundance of the crop seems to indicate, is the fruit of extreme culture. The soil in which it grows is never rank of course, but neither is it deep or rich. There is not the gusto and relish of life among cultivated Americans which seem to belong to master-minds. The climate has sharpened the mental perceptions, but dried up the marrow and the juice. The intellect preponderates over all that is emotional and spontaneous: the critical and discerning elements overpower the passionate and fervid. Refinement seems to rob the literary character of its bone and sinew, and culture to bleach its flowers of their colour. And, after all, the grace of strength transcends all other grace. Touches of anything gross and strong are rare: the dauntlessness of Nature seems exhausted; there is little that is grand-hearted, tumultuous, and self-forgetful.

On the other hand, and in these days it is a most legitimate source of pride, nothing is more remarkable than the consistent purity of the moral tone, and the unfailing delicacy of feeling. There are few, if any, lines in the whole range of this class of American poetry that a dying poet need wish to blot. From first to last, there are no insidious suggestions.

The democratic school of poets, with all their glaring faults, recognize that dainty perfection of expression is no substitute for stimulating thought; and that subtle analyses of the lighter emotions or deft-fingered sketches of society may display ingenuity or fancy, but afford no occasion for the exercise of creative force or imaginative power. Whitman has failed to revolutionize poetry. Rhyme and metre will endure so long as the songs of men or birds; Art will outlive the longest life. But the future is, we believe, in other respects with him and his school. He illustrates, as often by failure as by success, what are the true needs of modern poetry. Power, and force, and freedom, confer an immortality which no culture can secure. Behind the poetry there must be a living personality, a nature, coarse-fibred perhaps, but strong, deep, and vehement. Modern poetry, again, must be full of human interest. The cultivated poets of America have carried description to the highest pitch of perfection, perhaps because it affords the readiest escape from the crudities of their material civilization. But pictures of Nature, however exquisite, are com-

paratively valueless, unless they form the backgrounds for human action. The living figures are too often absent. It is in this field of human life and character that American novelists have reaped abundant harvest. There is yet room for her poets. The dramatic element is strong in Bret Harte, and, though Whitman draws types rather than individuals, his poetry is thronged with the concrete realities of life. Lastly, the future position of poetry must largely depend on her attitude to modern science. Legends, and myths, and romance, seem destined to disappear; but in their place are revealed unsuspected expanses of knowledge, and unbounded vistas opened to the imagination. Here again Whitman has proved a worthy pioneer. In many striking passages he has anticipated and assimilated the latest results of scientific enquiry.

To conjecture the future of poetry, whether in the Old or the New World, would be a fond and foolish task. Mr. Stedman considers that many causes combine at the present moment to check its growth in America. Among the principal causes of impaired vitality, and of the blight which destroys the promised fruit, this acute and fair-minded critic includes the Law of Copyright. The following paragraph, with which we conclude our survey of American poetry, is taken from his remarks upon this important subject:

"All classes of literary workmen still endure the disadvantage of a market drugged with stolen goods. Shameless as is our legal plundering of foreign authors, our blood is most stirred by the consequent injury to home literature,—by the wrongs, the poverty, the discouragement to which the foes of International Copyright subject our own writers."

In 1875, at Mr. Stedman's request, Mr. Swinburne wrote a unique autobiographical letter for use in compiling "Victorian Poets," in which he also gave some of his opinions concerning American Poets. The placing together of two paragraphs from this letter and the *Quarterly Review* article suggests illuminating comparisons. Swinburne wrote:

Now let me at last tell you how truly and how much I have enjoyed the beautiful book of poems which you must long since have thought of as thrown away on the most thankless and ungracious of recipients. Your rebuke on the subject of American poetry is doubtless as well deserved as it is kindly and gently ex-

pressed. Yet I must say that while I appreciate (I hope) the respective excellence of Mr. Bryant's Thanatopsis and of Mr. Lowell's Commemoration Ode, I cannot say that either of them leaves in my ear the echo of a single note of song. It is excellent good speech, but if given as song its first and last duty is to sing. The one is most august meditation, the other a noble expression of deep and grave patriotic feeling on a supreme national occasion; but the thing more necessary, though it may be less noble than these, is the pulse, the fire, the passion of music—the quality of a singer, not of a solitary philosopher or a patriotic orator. Now, when Whitman is not speaking bad prose he sings, and when he sings at all he sings well. Mr. Longfellow has a pretty little pipe of his own, but surely it is very thin and reedy. Again, whatever may be Mr. Emerson's merits, to talk of his poetry seems to me like talking of the scholarship of a child who has not learnt its letters. Even Browning's verse always goes to a recognizable tune (I say not to a good one), but in the name of all bagpipes what is the tune of Emerson's? Now it is a poor thing to have nothing but melody and be unable to rise above it into harmony, but one or the other, the less if not the greater, you *must* have. Imagine a man full of great thoughts and emotions and resolved to express them in painting who has absolutely no power upon either form or colour. Wainwright the murderer, who never had any thought or emotion above those of a pig or of a butcher, will be a better man for us than he. But (as Blake says) "Enough! or too much."

I read your former letter very carefully and have since re-read a good deal of Emerson's first volume of poems therein mentioned, which certainly contains noble verses and passages well worth remembering. I hope that no personal feeling or consideration will ever prevent or impair my recognition of any man's higher qualities. In Whittier the power and pathos and righteousness (to use a great old word which should not be left to the pulpiteers) of noble emotion would be more enjoyable and admirable if he were not so deplorably ready to put up with the first word, good or bad, that comes to hand, and to run on long after he is out of breath. For Mr. Lowell's verse, when out of the Biglow costume, I could never bring myself to care at all. I believe you know my theory that nothing which can possibly be *as well* said in prose ought ever to be said in verse.

Excerpts from reviews and from letters received or written by Stedman prior to, or after, the publication of "Poets of America" demonstrate its effectiveness. The *Dial* of January, 1886, expressly singles out one thought which must have been in the minds of many reviewers and friends when it says:

Of Mr. Stedman it was justly said in a recent number of the *Dial*, upon the occasion of a review of his "Poets of America," that no treatise upon that subject could be adequate which did not contain an account of his own poems. Among our poets still living, he certainly occupies the place next after Whittier and Lowell, Holmes and Whitman; and his rich and many-sided volume contains many pieces—all the way from the stirring early ballad of John Brown down to the recent splendid tribute to the genius of Hawthorne—which the reader would not willingly miss from his library. The variety of the metrical forms at his command, his wide range both as to subject and to sentiment, and, above all, the manly sincerity of his verse, commend it to the intellect and the heart of his readers. This is not the place to do more than note the appearance of the new edition of his collected poetical work; but the critic who should treat the subject at length would find in that work the material for a most interesting chapter in the history of American poetry.

It is altogether a beautiful book, and any of the twilight poets who outlast it will be long-lived fellows! The future literary historian will have to go to your pages for all his best material touching the present period. The *Tribune's* review is very handsome, and I wish I had the mate to it for the *Atlantic*. Did you see Sanborn's notice? . . . I wish you would run over to Boston, and let me talk uninterrupted for two hours about the book. [*T. B. Aldrich.*]

There are some personal qualities which go out into a man's work, unconsciously to him, which cannot be counterfeited or mistaken, and on every page of your volume I discover that rare quality of manly generosity which sweetens too few books of criticism. Whenever I meet it, it kindles in me a feeling of per-

sonal friendliness and acquaintance—a feeling which must excuse this present note.

I think that your essays will become the authority of all persons who wish for an impartial and a comprehensive history and criticism of the first great school of American Poets.

Especially interesting to me is your concluding chapter in which you indicate so clearly the symptoms of the present poetical dearth and the hopes of a future harvest. Your remarks upon the need of larger dramatic cultivation came to me with peculiar corroborative force, because for a long time past I have perceived (in my own poetic aspirations) an increasing tendency towards, and a desire for, dramatic or concrete expression. [*William R. Thayer.*]

I thank you very heartily for your book and still more (if you will let me) for the affectionate letters which accompanied it. I have not yet had time to read the volume through, but I have read enough to see that it is a solid contribution to literature. It is excellent in substance and temper. As for myself, you have done me more than justice. I naturally don't like it any the less, though I might have been severer myself. [*J. R. Lowell.*]

I congratulate you upon the completion of so considerable a task, and so important a contribution to critical literature. Much of it of course I am already familiar with in the pages of the *Century;* but to have it with the marginal references which my soul loves, and indexed copiously (even to the including of my own name) is a great boon. I am besides glad to think that you will now be able to return to your not lost, but too silent lyre; and that we shall hear more of our old favourites. [*Austin Dobson.*]

I read the work as a whole with deepening appreciation of the immense preparation of thought and life that went into the making of it. . . . I do not think you need concern yourself about any interpretation or criticism of the details of your work on the poetry of our common language; the breadth and sanity of view in it will justify it to all for whose judgment you care. I confess now, as before, to an honest and genuine admiration and respect for the life, the insight, and the weight of critical thought you have put into these two books. They will live and they will secure wider and more intelligent attention as time justifies your estimates and conclusions and fulfills your predictions. I feel per-

sonally grateful to you for a high service rendered to the best interests of literature. In this age of more superficial views on the scope and methods of poetry, and of literary creation in general, your clear insight into the sources of real power, your courageous conviction and your strong and clear statements have a tonic quality in them. I believe they will do much to clear the air and to give new and healthier impulse. I want to add another word to express my deep appreciation of what lies behind your work and gives it impulse and inspiration: a deep, native wealth of intellectual life—a movement of your whole nature upon the themes in hand. This is the quality which I look for most eagerly and find most rarely in contemporaneous writing. It is the only quality which transforms reading matter into literature and you are full of it. [*Hamilton W. Mabie.*]

I congratulate you upon your completion of so long and manifold a task, and upon its presentation to the public in so pleasing a shape; and finally to express my delight in your having given us Americans, and our English and indeed polyglot literary friends this embodiment of wise, subtile and gracious criticism upon our poets. It is idle for me to try now to go into specifications. For the whole book I thank you: it is a noble review of the noblest part of our literature—a review that will itself furnish not only recognition to the poets we have, but guidance and inspiration to poets whom we are to have. You have done a great deed—brilliant, and far more than brilliant. [*Moses Coit Tyler.*]

Every student of our literature owes you a debt of thanks for what you have done for him in "Poets of America," and I want to pay that part of my obligation at once. The thoroughness of your survey is in itself a cause for gratitude. Many a young student will do his work better for having before him such an example of painstaking, and I am heartily glad of the work because I wish there were more evidence of a desire after literary scholarship than I see, and I think such an achievement as yours will do a great deal toward stimulating collegians and others to set about a critical study of literature. In the absence of academics and traditional authorities, every contribution to high criticism is an aid toward the establishment of standards. [*Horace E. Scudder.*]

The charm of the book to me lies not so much in the soundness of judgments as in the freshness and vigor with which they are

expressed. I verily believe that some of the poets who are just losing their hold upon the public will owe to you an Indian summer of popularity. I heard a gentleman say last night, as he was turning over the leaves of the book: "By Jove, I didn't know we had so much of a literature." I think a great many will owe that discovery to you. I owe so much to you already both for your personal kindness and your critical guidance that any expression of gratitude which I may utter will necessarily be inadequate. [*H. H. Boyesen.*]

I congratulate you on the issue of your book which contains the very soundest and most valuable criticism ever written on our writers and I'd like to hang metaphorically the man who did the *Nation's* review of it. [*Edward Eggleston.*]

I think you have reason to take great satisfaction in those two books. They are solidly and thoroughly done and have that monumental character after which an author learns to long; something that cannot be skipped or ignored, even a hundred years hence, for they are an essential part of our literary history. [*T. W. Higginson.*]

There was "a slight flurry in the market" in reference to Stedman's treatment of Poe, but the storm that was aroused by the great chapter on Whitman has even yet by no means passed. A small volume would be required to give the interesting and amusing history. Stedman knew he was, as it were, risking his critical life when he prepared the chapter,—at least with many readers. He weighed well and long his conclusions, and his words. He knew that these would displease Whitman's admirers, certainly his most reckless ones, and as much would he disappoint Whitman's extreme critics. "The article will be impartial," he wrote, "and will offend everybody—both his friends and enemies. I shall be torn all to pieces for writing *judicially*." The event emphatically proved the prevision. The chapter on Whitman, as it stands in its final revision, is so thoroughly thought out, so discriminating, and especially so compact, that an adequate epitomization is out of the question. Upon its

careful reading must be based any judicial estimate of Stedman as a master-critic and appreciator. Will his estimation, in essentials, be the final verdict of the best judges of the future? A résumé here of the letters received by Stedman and of the press notices after the appearance of the critique in the *Century*, in 1880, and in book-form, in 1885, is also impossible. Several qualifications should be borne in mind as prerequisites of valuation: The first is that Stedman consciously, plainly, and always, held that in the artist's personality, esthetics and ethics are not necessarily interdependent, and that, hence, the art-work should be judged apart from the artist's moral or social nature and actions. If, for instance, immorality or other obnoxious qualities appeared in the poem it was by that much, at least, an artistic failure; the poem should be judged upon its own merits,—railing at the poet himself is not literary criticism. Secondly, Stedman cared infinitely more for the recognition of the positively good art-work than for the condemnation of that which was negative or bad. In answering critics perhaps he seems sometimes to err in detailed discrimination because he thinks *this* special complainant needs just the emphasis upon the praiseworthy to which he has been blind. Possibly it should be added that to Stedman it was also clear that the higher and purer the spirituality of the poem the greater was its worth as poetry.

Lastly, as is made abundantly clear in the letter to Whitman quoted at the beginning of the following chapter, the primal and essential source of Stedman's admiration for Whitman's genius was the consanguinity of Americanism inherited by both poets. That letter is a vivid revelation of the astonishing unity in diversity of the two men, and by it, alone, can one see the deep impulse which compelled Stedman to lead in the revolution which soon came in the world's recognition of what was elemental and grand in Whitman. With such precautions borne in mind we may quote the following paragraphs from letters—the dates should be noted:

To W. D. Howells.

May 8, 1880.

I knew, of course, that Whitman would never have any just cause to complain of *you*—in any matter that might pertain to your official management. But I supposed, from his statement, that he at some time had endeavored to open relations with the *Atlantic*, and wished to know exactly what had occurred. The fact is that he has been well-treated by *Harper* and *exceptionally* favored by the *Galaxy*—and in my opinion never had any just claims to the honors of martyrdom.

My letter to you was the counterpart of others sent to the other magazines, and therefore written by a copyist and purely formal. But that you know as well as I.

The Whitman article is one of the series *contracted for* with *Scribner's*—and I am sincere in saying that it is a great sorrow with me that I do not get time to keep up with even this engagement properly. You are so good as to suggest that the *Atlantic* would use the paper on Whitman. Now, Dr. Holland very strongly objected to my including it in the *Scribner's* series, until I made it clear to him, first, That it would be *judicial*—and that it was time such an article should appear, and, second, That no review of the *American Poets* could *ignore* a man who had made himself so much talked-of at home and abroad, and had assumed a position of his own.

Should the good Doctor still protest, I should be only too glad to send you the Ms., but I think my arguments convinced him—and of course it is more convenient for me to have this entire series printed in the same magazine.

To R. W. Gilder.

July 1, 1880.

I am skirmishing *in re* Whitman, and dreading my task. His poetry is so remarkable throughout, good and bad, that one doesn't know where to begin and where to leave off. I am struck with the notion that he has killed off younger poets—not by writing better poetry than they can—but somewhat as a dab of *red* on a serene and lovely picture will make all the other parts look tame and of no account. To take an extreme case—Fawcett tackled Whitman, rather gratuitously in a late number of the *Californian*. The July number of that magazine (I take it) has a retort, called "Satin

and Sacking," signed "Anthony Thrall," in which Fawcett's flimsy verses and Whitman's very best are printed side by side to show who and what Whitman's critic is! Conceive the ludicrous result! And yet the process is wholly unfair. *Is* there an "Anthony Thrall"? Is it not O'Connor or some other member of the "Junta"? And are they not sworn to pull down any man who dares to criticise their poet? Never mind. I cannot leave out of my book a poet who is extolled by O'Connor, Emerson, Conway, Burroughs, Swinton, Rossetti, Swinburne, Buchanan, Dowden, Linton, Clive—but the line stretches out "to the crack of doom." I shall write *honestly* and appreciatively, but judicially, and take whatever results with a clear conscience.

To George William Curtis.

July 16, 1880.

I am *wrestling* with Whitman. Somehow, reading closely a writer of any parts, and no matter how he has irritated me, I always find an immense amount of good in him. This is my besetting sin. If Dennett has only left me half his mantle!

To Richard Grant White.

July 18, 1880.

I wrote a *judicial* (the first judicial) review of Poe, in the *May Scribner's*—which pleased partisans of neither side—yet made a noise. If you ever read anything, look at it. Now I have to write upon Whitman, for a large book upon which I am engaged—a companion-volume to the "Victorian Poets." Can't ignore him—too widely known here and abroad. Shall write the first *judicial* article, also, *in re* Whitman. Shall castigate him for affectation and humbug in his *life*, *manners*, *style;* but fully recognize his lyrical and descriptive genius. You are not aware that he has, in the course of years, become an *artist* in his irregular verse. Just glance at his "Captain! O my Captain!" and at "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and you will find something to astonish you. The latter long lyric is a wonderful affair, *me judice.*

To R. W. Gilder.

August 22, 1880.

Here is the *Whitman*, slightly ahead of time. It is exactly the length of the Poe article—15,000 words. I probably never shall

write another of the same length; certainly never shall have to study the exact force and meaning of each word so closely again. Heaven be praised: it is done!

I expect it will get me into all sorts of hot water. Probably your cold-blooded editors will think it a good thing for the magazine if it does.

To T. B. Aldrich.

November 22, 1880.

A single word as to Walt Whitman. An examination of his complete editions modifies considerably any opinion of him that is based upon the irregular, and often wretched stuff, of his that has appeared in the newspapers. Besides, he has gradually evolved a true *rhythm* out of his chaotic beginnings. Added to the foregoing, you will find, I think, every point *you* make against him made in my article, if you read it *carefully*. That article is Liebig's condensed extract—not a spare word in it, and often a whole argument or point in a single sentence.

You mistake in thinking I attach the least value to the "foreign endorsement" of Whitman. *The true purpose* of my opening *section* is to explode the theory that he is a martyr and persecuted. I show that he has been more puffed and praised and written up than any three American authors now living—and has studiously pushed his own career. This purpose (which I have effectively carried out) his disciples see, and are consequently disconcerted.

In criticising his indecencies and alleged metrical reform, I review him carefully *upon his own ground*, and never have done more original investigation in my life. *But*, I credit him with the remarkable lyrical and descriptive *genius* which I always have claimed that he possesses.

In short, I look upon his *character* and career as *melodramatic*, diplomatic, insincere; his philosophy as trite and superficial; his conceit and arrogance as unbounded; his power of diction, and his knowledge of out-door nature, as something almost unexcelled.

To William Sloane Kennedy.

December 13, 1885.

I am glad that you don't consider me so inhospitable to new ideas—that you do believe me to be on the alert and with eyes set toward the future. Your paper on the poet's craft is welcome; there is good and earnest writing in it, and with your hope for,

and sense of the need *of*, new rhythmical effects and freedom in poetry I am *wholly* in accord. Not that I would forego *one* of the old forms. I am a *universalist* in art.

Speaking of our grand old Whitman, I have tried to show his steady advance in perfecting the "various" harmony of his own free and elemental method. He is so noble in his music and imaginings that not even the undiscriminating pæans—in bad taste and worse tact—of fanatics like your Dr. Bucke have been able long to retard the world's appreciation. Like you, however, I am grateful to Dr. Bucke for his goodness and his lovable care of Whitman and *of my dear friend O'Connor.*

To Thomas S. Hastings.

December 3, 1886.

I am sure you are right in your feeling of perplexity over the Whitman chapter—there are, at least, seeming inconsistencies in it, but not so many as in the old sinner himself, and in his work! The fact is that he *is* a man of remarkable genius, and sincere in certain directions while a perfect humbug in others.

To James L. Pennypacker.

March 25, 1894.

Glancing through my chapter on Whitman, I see nothing of importance which at this latest date I would retract or modify—whether of praise or blame. Mr. Whitman told me, shortly before his death, that, when my article first appeared in *Scribner's* (the *Century*) it was the first essay in a "conventional" magazine which had fully recognized his aim and genius. On the other hand, he never quite forgave my honest and severe criticism of certain of his methods,—criticism now to be found on pages 366–371 of "Poets of America." You have been misinformed as to my attitude now. In fact, my recent lectures on the "Nature of Poetry" also both praise and criticize him; and my essay in the earlier volume is neither adulation nor detraction. I took infinite pains to make it fair and judicial; but one always falls short of his best intent.

To W. H. Edwards.

May 5, 1904.

In relation to the chapter on Walt. Whitman, I may say that, when it first appeared as a contribution to *Scribner's Monthly*,

twenty years ago, the poet's extravagant admirers and apostles (like Dr. Bucke of Canada) were grievously disappointed with my estimate; thought I had done him injustice, etc. Nevertheless, it was the first exhaustive and judicial review of him that had found entrance to a leading American magazine. I think Walt. himself saw "between the lines" that I thought him no exceptional saint, prophet or patriot, but that I did recognize his genius, originality and his artistic intent. On his death-bed he told me that he was content with my estimate and that I had understood him better than either his extreme friends or his foes. On the whole, I am still prepared to defend my article, and I think Whitman's imagination was very great, while I still claim that he violated his own law of truth to Nature by expressing those operations and aspects, which *she* strives to conceal.

Some of the aftermath concerning questions suggested by "Poets of America" is gleaned in the following letters:

To H. E. Scudder.

January 17, 1887.

I think you are right about the finer *artistic* quality of verse by recent younger poets. What it lacks is a certain purpose—earnestness—glow of imagination and passion. But *soul* has a way of slipping into a beautiful *body*, in its own due time. So I am hopeful. But, alas, both soul and body latterly are beyond *my* chance to create. But, again, I am hopeful that even for me *le printemps reviendra!*

To Mrs. ———

December 13, 1888.

Our common friend, Mr. Stoddard, has shewn me the letter which he recently received from you, concerning the "Library of American Literature" and my unfortunate self—and the several letters which I have ventured at intervals, to address to you. Accept my thanks for even a vicarious acknowledgment of those letters. I surely should not have written more than one, if I had not been unable to find your exact address and absolutely of the opinion that each had failed to reach you. This simplicity on my part grew, I suppose, out of the vast number of letters which I receive, from friends and strangers, usually upon their own interests, and the fact that I never in my life have permitted a

woman's letter to remain unanswered. It never occurred to me that I had, by chance or intention injured or so slighted any lady that she would refrain from some acknowledgment of a courteous epistle.

But you now have informed me of your reasons for silence, and of your point of view with respect to my personal and editorial requests, so I take the liberty of writing once more, to say—

That I am deeply wounded by your open charge that I have treated you and other women in a way "little short of insulting." Thinking over the battles I have waged for years in behalf of women, and the charges of over-deference to them individually and collectively to which even my friends subject me, it decidedly "cuts me up" to meet such an accusation from a woman and a poet—and that one, F——— P———.

My only satisfaction is to be found in the fact that your charge is made with an evident ignorance of "the documents in the case." You have taken, as is most apparent, as a basis for it, the skit of a *boulevard* London paper, and plainly are not well acquainted with the volume to which the Mercutio for the journal refers. Another thing: you are doubtless the only author of us all who has not seen at a glance that his light and clever sarcasm is aimed, *not* at you and your sister-poets, but at the volume "Poets of America" and its author! I am his target, but in these days of jest and irreverence, the successful *feuilletonist* is the one who can make the most points—and the target is expected to enjoy the fun as much as the marksman—or else to be thought a very wooden one, indeed. The author of those stanzas knew they were quite *untrue* —as to the "470 pages, etc.,"—but that was not his business. *Tant pis pour les faits*, you know.

Now, the "Poets of America" is a volume chiefly composed of nine essays on the famous and now "elder" American poets—Bryant, Whittier, Emerson, Longfellow, Poe, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, Taylor—the last, my personal comrade, having an essay devoted to him only because he was *dead* and taken by me as a type of New York man-of-letters during a certain period. These nine poets chanced to be men. The essays on them occupy 374 of the 476 pages of text. Of the remaining 102 pages, *61* are devoted to introductory essays on the growth of letters and imagination in America up to the generation under review. *41* pages only are devoted to a final chapter rapidly surveying the recent

and present outlook—noting tendencies—looking into the future, etc.; of these 41 pages, *15 only* are occupied with a condensed reference to the "General Choir" of poets now more or less active, of various ages, and in all portions of the United States. This swift summary was made with great hesitation, and merely as necessary to show the different phases of poetic feeling and work now evident. It was avowedly and markedly *un*critical—therein differing from the other 461 pages of the book. To avoid such misunderstandings as yours, I state at the opening of the chapter that it is merely *statistical and enumerative* and have borne down on this fact elsewhere in the volume. The writers I *do* mention, among whom your name appears, were carefully selected from a list ten times their number. *Moreover;* of these 15 statistical pages 3½ are occupied with the women, 11½ with the male authors—and are not much out of proportion to their respective muster-rolls, especially in view of the (dead) poet Lanier's peculiar qualities requiring some 2½ pages for discussion. Again—I preface the list of women, and close it, with the warmest tribute words could pay to their genius, grace, feeling, so marked in American Women-poets.

There is a similar statistical account of the minor poets, male and female, of (say) Griswold's time—in my early chapter ii. In that I merely mention my own dear and brilliant mother's (Mrs. E. C. Kinney's) *name*—and she and Mrs. Osgood were thought by Poe and many others to be the most natural and genuine of the many women then publishing verse. But I certainly now am guilty of one grave offense, that of writing at such length as to become a bore. As to my "Poets of America" I will only add that I was severely chastised by my most friendly critics for making *any* reference to the recent poets.

The "Library of American Literature" in which Miss Hutchinson and I desire, of course, to represent the poetry of one of our favorites and most natural lyrical poets—yourself—is a publication with which, as I conceive, the character and past actions of its editors have little to do. It bids fair to be a "standard" and household thesaurus of our national literature. We are trying to edit it judicially. The publishers and authors almost without exception, are aiding us in every way. You have punished *me*, already; but I trust you will be lenient to our publishers, who take a patriotic interest in the work—to my amiable and brilliant co-editor—

and the American public that regards so favorably your lyrics—finally to yourself, who can so easily withstand the embargo laid upon our hospitable haven.

To Maurice Thompson.

December 1, 1892.

. . . Lastly, and as modestly as possible, in my own defense, I have spent ten years (not of my own volition, but because, being in I could not stop) of devotion to the fine fame of the literature of our own country. Longing to write poetry, I wrote the "Poets of America." The (to me) important portions of that and its companion-work were the long essays on the elder poets, and on the principles of poetry: but I put in chapters on the younger poets and current phases, to make the books more complete. The "Poets of America" was issued here and in London. Not only abroad, but *at home*, it was at first almost condemned, *precisely for* its attention to an appreciation of the younger poets. I really think I cannot justly be accused of ignoring my brother-authors, either in that work, or in the "Library of American Literature." I think I have devoted more years of my life to *them*, in books and in newspaper reviews, etc., than to making my own lyrics. And I have never been afraid to recognize the young fellows, and to believe in the future.

To H. C. Kirk.

February 13, 1898.

I am passing most of my time away from home under medical treatment, and am, in fact, forbidden to read or write. But as I am visiting Lawrence Park over Sunday, and here found, among many other letters, yours of the 11th, I am going to disobey orders and answer it.

In thus doing I am also disobeying my invariable rule—to wit, not to give any direct critical judgments upon individual writers beyond those presented in my written works. But I am moved to say that it is a very bad method of criticism to select any author as the greatest among a given group, unless he towers above the rest, as Shakespeare, for example, over-topped his Elizabethan contemporaries. It is also impossible to determine the relative valuation of writers of as distinctly different types as those whom you differentiated in your characterization of our "elder American

poets." The question always is, how good is any author among others possessing the same general qualities? Let me however, state that I think Lowell must have had more "all-round-genius" than any of his American compeers, because I have just found, in editing all the poets whom you name for my "American Anthology" (now in preparation) that I have been obliged to allow Lowell more pages than to any one of the others, on account of his success in so many forms of poetry, and so distinct in spirit from the rest. He not only has, as you say, "martial ardor and strength," but, as I have said in "Poets of America" was "our most brilliant and learned critic and gave us our first native idyl, our best and most complete work in dialectic verse, and the noblest heroic ode that America has produced,—each and all ranking with the first of their kinds in English literature of the modern time." His many-sided nature could not be satisfied with one mood, or one form of expression, if it had been he might have been as imaginative in the poetry of nature as was Bryant, with whom he was certainly equally true as a descriptive poet. His poem, "In the Twilight," shows how melodious and rhythmical he could be when he chose. Shelley might have written it. Whittier might have written "The First Snow-Fall." I think his wit was more flashing, and his humor of a higher type than Holmes. As a philosopher, he was more like Montaigne than Emerson. Unfortunately, he was too pronounced a scholar, and too much a master of Belle-lettres, to care to appreciate Whitman.

As for Emerson, his prose was poetry, and he has had a deeper influence than any other American poet on the thought of the nation, though thousands of those who are affected by it have received that effect indirectly, and are unaware of its source. If Lowell had devoted himself, as Longfellow did, almost entirely to expression in the form of poetry, he perhaps could have excelled all of his colleagues. The same could not be said of Holmes, nor of Whittier. In my youth I thought it could be said of Longfellow, who was a poet, pure and simple; but I do not think so now. His mission was that of awakening the sense of beauty in our rude and young America, by producing for it an art reflecting European ideals until it could create art and beauty of its own. I have sometimes wished that Poe, the paragon of melodists, had been able to write nothing but verse, yet, after all his more ideal tales, at the last analysis, are nothing more than "prose poems."

There! You see I have left the subject just where I began it, having only stated the fact that, by virtue of Lowell's many-sided genius, I have been obliged to give him more space in "An American Anthology" than any other of the poets considered by your Club. Having in mind your characterization of their distinct qualities, I am forced to remember that we cannot inventory oats by a yard stick, nor brocade with a peck measure.

To his Mother.

January 8, 1886.

Sidney Lanier—a most poetic soul—was keenly sensitive to all fine notes and harmonies; one who surely heard melody "too fine for mortal ear" of the common fibre. His exquisite feeling for music gave a strange originality to his work,—but it also injured it as *verbal* and *metrical* poetry. For it led him constantly to endeavor to accomplish in *verse* what it is the province of *Music* to accomplish—he aimed at certain divine effects, and was not sure of producing them. Doubtless, had he lived long, he might have beaten his music out—have conquered his means of expression. But I wrote what I thought of Lanier, in a paper for the *Critic*, shortly after his death.

This letter concerning Lanier suggests a question which must have frequently arisen in the minds of readers of Stedman's works: Largely, intimately, and judicially, he has written of poetry and of poets, and yet one will look in vain for anything more than a word or two of cynical allusion to what has so much occupied the attention of many poets. We allude to technic. But one letter speaks of the subject:

To Mr. Marquand.

March 7, 1887.

I suspect that I'm not quite so fresh from the classics—antique and modern—as you, and you somewhat staggered me by your courteous and modest allusion to the seeming inconsistency of calling a verse of six feet a hexameter, and one of four feet a dimeter. Still, I thought there must have been some good or influential reason for my designation of the measure of "Hiawatha" as the "rhymeless trochaic dimeter." To-night I have looked up the matter, and see why I gave it this name. The fact is that I never

have *studied* "English" "prosody": my acquaintance with technical divisions and names of verse began and ended with the scansion and analysis of Greek and Latin measures. It happens that all the chief authorities on *those* pronounce a sequence of 4 trochees—a *trochaic dimeter;* they treat the iambus in the same way, and make an iambic (or trochaic) dimeter consist of *eight* feet. Our great Hadley's Grammar (foot of p. 318) says:

"In *trochaic*, *iambic*, and *anapæstic* verses, each 'meter' consists of two feet. . . . In *other kinds* of verse each foot is reckoned as a 'meter'; thus, a dactylic hexameter consists of six feet," etc., etc.

This, of course seems (as you thought) illogical, and is purely arbitrary and traditional—but I accepted the custom.

Looking now at Goold Brown's remarkable "Grammar of Grammars," I see that he departs from the custom, and (very consistently) makes the trochaic dimeter consist of two feet only.

An added reference:

I was disappointed in Mr. ———'s lectures—all about the *forms* of verse, and the meanest forms besides. Those Londoners write so long of "iambe and pentameters" in their weeklies, that they —as Emerson said—get to thinking of such things as "real." Probably ———'s countrymen,—those who know of him at all,— will be surprised at the reception which it became the "correct form" to give him here. We seem to have no idea of proportion— of relative merit, in the matter of entertaining guests.

A slip of paper has been found, dated 1885, at the head of which is jotted, *In Preface*,—probably referring to "Poets of America." As the memorandum was not put into proper shape, and never published, it is hardly fair to give it publicity, except as an interesting indication of the poet's opinion upon the subject. It reads:

I still urge *simplicity*. For my own part, have confined my long words to prose—and don't think that anyone reading my verse, will see in it the critic of poetry. My poems are the expression of feeling, impulse, passion, and art-instinct; not of curious logic and ratiocination. To be sure, Poetry is free and sovereign, and unbounded in her means and provinces; but metaphysics and analysis in verse must be the work of a very great genius to have the spontaneous, *unstudied* air that is the charm of Poetry.

It is true that Poetry is genius expressing itself in *language*—even in metrical language, which grammarians and prosodists have a habit of materialistically analyzing into feet, measures, rhymes, cæsuras, etc. But my criticism, though often technical, does not dabble with such matters as these, except incidentally. For one, I never scanned one of my own lines in my life; if a poet does not compose by ear, and cannot trust his ear, the music or poetry at all events—was not born in him. If I do not analyze the form of verse, it is because I do not care to—that is not the object of this book.

At the same time, through certain media we obtain the best effects—certain forms are natural to the English-trained ear; and very great poems, of certain kind, have been written, by instinct and judgment, in those forms. Hence the relation of form to purpose occasionally—as in the talks upon blank-verse—comes under discussion.

In 1904 Stedman wrote:

I have lived to see our young imaginative writers devoted to prose fiction and romance, and poetry "out of fashion" with them. But this I predicted, many years ago, in my "Victorian Poets" or "Poets of America," so I am not disturbed by it—especially as I know the springtime of song will return again. Besides it is in prose romance that the South as well as the North has found its genius awakened and allied itself to the modern literary world.

Also:

It seems to me that,—under the existing conditions of scientific zest, journalism, and prose fiction,—the field of poetry is displaying, at the outset of the twentieth century, only what was predicted in "Victorian Poets" (1875) and "Poets of America" (1885). Both these works were written while poetry was still our most honored form of imaginative literature.

To Percy MacKaye.

May 25, 1907.

When this sound of my voice reaches you, you must realize that it comes from as deep and far away crypt as the excavation in which you leave Medbury listening at the end of the prologue

to your "Sappho and Phaon." Assuredly I am a buried man in this twentieth century, and it is only now and then when a pick like yours touches my tomb that I indulge in posthumous exclamations.

Your poetic tragedy, however, has reached me, and for the moment, as you see, calls me to life. Taken as a whole, it is the most various and inclusive work of the sort thus far. Indeed I look upon it as the ultimate outcome and culmination of the *nuova antica* poetcraft. In the variety of its measures and their perfection, and in fact in all of its classical, scholarly, picturesque accessories and appurtenances, it goes beyond anything I have seen, and naturally is of profound interest to one like myself who is something of a poet, and in heart, at least, a Hellenist.

There can be no doubt that "Sappho and Phaon," if produced on the stage with fidelity to your instructions, and with a classical beauty so attainable by our latter-day scenic artists, will be an exquisitely poetic dream. Some of our managers appear to have learned that it is just as well to lavish outlay upon what is essentially fine as upon what is coarse and vulgar, and that the public will accept the former as readily as the latter and necessarily be elevated by it.

All the same, and much as I love "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," I look upon this classical play as I looked upon "Fenris the Wolf," as a beautiful *tour de force*—like some superb gallery piece of a rising painter, after the composition of which he has attained such mastery of his powers that his proper and predestined work becomes easy for him. To more clearly explain my meaning, let me say that while I do not consider Moody's "The Great Divide" as his proper and predestined work, it does show an adaptability to the handling of any kind of work pertaining to his own time which he would not have possessed if he had not first composed "The Fire Bringer" and "The Masque of Judgment."

In short, I have been recently impressed by two things: first, the fulfillment of my long-ago prediction of the dramatic quality which must attach to any renaissance of poetry. "Wisdom is justified of her children," and you, Moody, Torrence, Mrs. Dargan, of yourselves, form a school which I have looked for. But, second: You will not have done your work at all until you show some evidence in it of the spirit of a New World. I have always been

catholic, a stickler for the universality of art. Art has no boundaries—yet this implies that it is not restricted in its cosmopolitanism even from the country of its begetting. You only show your own limitations when you profess yourself unable to find American atmosphere and theme for American dramas. I have long had several themes at my command. If I had the vital force and leisure for their utilization! You fellows are all in your prime and possess a dramatic market unknown in my nineteenth century, and I don't want you to disappoint me. Give me a chance to say *nunc dimittis!*

I suppose you will remember that in 1905 I was deeply interested in the Waldstein proposal to excavate Herculaneum; though I do not recall whether I actually read you my lyric at that time addressed to Dr. W., and contributed to the *Bibliophile*.[1] It was a matter of grief to me that the most characteristic poem which I had written for years was locked up in that publication as closely as if buried by lava and scoriæ. This I did not comprehend until too late for its withdrawal, and publication elsewhere. Last autumn when it seemed that after all Dr. Waldstein might enter upon his work, I did send him a private copy of my poem, and he, like myself, is much disgruntled that it cannot be printed even in England. I enclose to you a slip containing three stanzas, curiously related to Medbury's outburst on pp. 16, 17 of your book. I have inserted them in my own copy, and think that you may care to have this slip for yours. One of the stanzas would have gone well with some classical quotation on a fly-leaf. . . . Your pages 194–201 are very fine.

[1] Contained in "Complete Poems," 1908.

CHAPTER XXII

A LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

March 27, 1889.

DEAR WALT WHITMAN:

I was profoundly touched, and greatly enriched and honored, by your unexpected gift. From every point of view, I don't see that anything of more worth could be added to the hoard of—1. An American. 2. A book-lover. 3. A devotee of the great, the broad, the original, the imaginative, in poetry and humane literature. 4. Of one whose good fortune it is to be your friend, your contemporary, your appreciative student and reader.

You have indeed done well, in thus bringing together, under one cover and in this striking and unique shape, all your life-work. There is no book just like this, and there never will be. The *personal* note is everywhere. Moreover, as a *book* merely, the most famous bibliophile—with the famous binders and printers, and a mine of wealth, to aid him—could not get up a volume so notable and so sure of ever-growing value. This would be my notion of the volume—as a *book*, if I knew nothing of its author—of its "only begetter." Moreover, it impresses one as the result of a growth: of something not *made* offhand, but the final outcome of a certain sæcular evolution.

For the regard, the affection, which convoyed your noble argosy to this my haven,—believe me, my dear and honored old Bard, they are returned to you four-fold.

I have delayed this letter a few days, because it was on my mind to send you a return-gage—a more dimensional, but otherwise inadequate, symbol of our common nationalism and outlook. To-day, then, I forward to you by express the first seven volumes of the "Library of American Literature" (the seventh enriched by your own poetry and portrait)—which you will accept, I trust, and which surely will seem of more significance to Walt Whitman than any other gift which *I* could send him. The succeeding volumes will reach you as they come from the press. If you live to read them all,—well, I needn't wish you any greater length of

years! To edit them, we have served as many years as Jacob served for Rachel, and I fear our practical returns will be as disappointing as he found the gift of Leah.

However, *you* of all men will take in, comprehend, the purpose, the meaning, of this long compilation. *You* will justly estimate its significance, and this quite irrespectively of its literary or artistic qualities. There are masterpieces in it. But it is *not* a collection of masterpieces: it is something of more moment to you and me. It is *America*. It is the symbolic, the essential, America from her infancy to the second Century of her grand Republic. It is the diary, the year-book, the Century-book, of her progress from Colonialism to Nationality. All her health and disease are here: her teething, measles, mumps, joy, delirium, nuptials, conflicts, dreams, delusions, her meanness and her nobility. We purposely make the work *inclusive*—trying to show every facet of this our huge, as yet half-cut, rose-diamond.

So I know that, in turning these pages, from the early "adventure," from the early theology and superstition, from the early heroism and *grit*, down to the latest moment of our wondrous development—I know that you will be seeing, in your chamber, what you have so observed and thought upon for years—as you went to and fro, among the people, through the land and under the canopy. In short, I send you an American "cosmorama" for your own room: hoping it may lighten some of the hours of your retirement there, and that it may now and then remind you of its designer.

Nothing better becomes this compilation than the portion covering selections from your own work. Fine as it is, I said to Miss Hutchinson that I could readily obtain half-a-dozen counterparts, equally imaginative and noble, from your "Leaves of Grass," etc. It is my hope that you see, from the manner in which that *précis* is made up, that I do measurably comprehend your genius and philosophy; that I have *understood* your purposes in life and in art. A chap was here, 'tother day, who had been visiting you. He reported you as saying: "I wouldn't take off my hat to Apollo, if we should happen to meet." That pleased me immensely, and I "laughed consumedly," as the old Comedies say. Well! there *is* too much taking off of hats, but I certainly should doff my own to the Sun-God. On the other hand, if it should prove cold in his neighborhood, I should speedily clap it on again. Nor have I

ever essayed *serious and prolonged criticism* of any man, unless I deemed him worthy of it—i. e. *great.* For the small-fry, a few passing words and kindly phrases are quite enough. This is my longest letter of the year—rambling enough, but may you have plenty of time to read a thousand such! And so always think of me as one of your most faithful lovers—for such indeed is

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

P. S. We are in mourning for John Bright to-day. You must read Smalley's letter in to-day's *Tribune* (28th) on Bright and Whittier, etc.

If you ever write anyone, by hand or proxy, it would be a great delight to hear from you some time—and I should especially like to know how the big "Library American Literature" strikes Walt Whitman—of all men the best judge of it.

The history of "A Library of American Literature," eleven volumes, octavo, compiled and edited by Edmund C. Stedman and Ellen M. Hutchinson, is told in the Preface to the final volume:

The successive periods cover a space of nearly three centuries; that is, from Shakespeare's time to our own. For every author quoted at least five others have been under consideration, and probably a larger average number of books has been examined for each selection made. Until the "Library" passed into the ownership of the present publishers, who enlarged its limits, and supplied an office and ample means for its completion, not only the critical editing, but the proof-reading and other routine labor, were performed by us in our own homes, to the exclusion of original work and needful recreation. It was thought by the business projector that the volumes could be made up with speed and ease, after the manner of various compilations for the subscription-trade. But we finally accepted his advances, because there seemed a chance to do something of real service, and only upon condition that we should work in our own way,—and thus doubled the labor and postponed our remuneration. The projector, for reasons extraneous to this enterprise, was unable to complete it; after three years only five volumes were stereotyped. Some delay ensued before it was taken up by Messrs. Charles L. Webster & Co., who have enabled us to extend and beautify the work, and who

now issue it complete within two years from the publication of Volumes i.–iii., in May, 1888. The compilation of the series began in 1883. During the intervening seven years a notable increase of literary activity has been observed, new and successful writers appearing in all portions of the country. Our original design, planned in a week's time, has been unchanged—but somewhat extended. Notwithstanding the progressive increase, in size and scope, of Volumes vi.–x. (without increase of cost to the subscribers), it became necessary to compile the present and still larger volume, devoted to new authors and to the General Index, and with the addition of an important feature—the "Short Biographies" of all writers represented in the compilation.

These Biographies, added in response to many suggestions from the press and the public, have been prepared by Mr. Arthur Stedman, who from the beginning of our labors has given his close attention to the technical detail of the work.

The early disadvantages mentioned, however unwelcome to the editors, may not have resulted adversely to their undertaking. For we can fairly claim that the outcome is a "handmade" Library; that it is not a piece of "machine-work"; that it is the product of the individual effort of two editors, consulting for years in harmony, and as cheerfully as possible whether the labor was agreeable or trying. No accessory judgment has interfered to produce a confusion of tastes and methods. With less than a half-dozen exceptions, every author in the series has been read by the editors themselves, and each selection examined by both of them. Their powers and labors have been equal, and there has been no duty too high or too low for either of them to perform. In considering the scope of this compilation, proud as we are of the showing made by our country, we understood quite well that we should often endure a conflict with our personal taste, and that our object could be gained only by such endurance. Against this, there have been enjoyable compensations. The spirit of the work was indicated by the titles given to the early Colonial selections, and such diversions have added zest to our duties throughout the series. . . .

Next, we have respected our title, which is neither a "Thesaurus" nor a "Valhalla," but "A Library" of American literature, and thus denotes a compilation varied in subject, treatment, and merit, and above all—inclusive, often waiving a severe adherence to

perfection in style or thought. It is not confined to masterpieces, though not a few of them can be found within it. To prepare an eclectic and exclusive miscellany from the writings of the greatest divines, statesmen, historians, poets, and romancers of America, would be a pleasant office and withal a light one. Seven weeks might serve for its editing, instead of seven years, and our eleven volumes might readily have been occupied with less than fifty authors, provided that great publishers were sufficiently altruistic to yield the copyright of their best stock in trade. The familiar eminent names have not absorbed our time, but the class whose name is legion. Yet minor authors, singly or in groups reflect the tendencies of a period even more clearly than their more original compeers. We trust that no great writer has been neglected in the "Library," and that few will object to the representation of one of humble cast by a single poem or page, when fifty times as much tribute is paid to an Emerson or a Hawthorne. We have troubled ourselves very little concerning the obscurity of any "forgotten author" from whose writings we have selected something to illustrate a special phase, or because it merited preservation. Moreover, there is truth in Sainte-Beuve's remark upon out-of-date works: "Their very faults become representative, and are not without charm, as the once-admired expression of a taste that has given place to another, which in its turn will likewise pass away." Sometimes a non-professional writer has afforded the clearest statement of an important matter: such, for instance, as the law of copyright. The multitude of those who write enlarges as their grade decreases, therefore some authors whom we include are not chosen as superior to others who are omitted; for every class and period we have tried simply to give fair representation within our limits of room; and occasionally some extract, that we liked better than one previously included, has been ruled out because we could not devote any more space to its topic. Except, however, in the case of the most eminent authors, it would be unjust to measure our estimate of their relative importance by the number of pages allotted to them respectively. Poetry, for example, is precious for its condensation; besides, it may be difficult to obtain even a couple of pages suited to this compilation from the works of some noble scholar, while a young and promising novelist, if represented at all, needs room for a chapter, or an episode, or a short and complete tale.

Lastly, it has been our aim to compile for professional readers a copious and trustworthy Reference Book, suited to the needs of working American authors, teachers, journalists, and public men. We have striven to give correct texts (sometimes differing from those usually accepted) of significant and historic sermons, speeches, public documents, and declarations. Few very notable short poems have been omitted, scarcely one that has justly preserved the name of a "single-poem" poet. The ballads of the nation, in times of public excitement, lend to this "Library" a meaning fully as important, we believe, as that which Macaulay derived from the rudest catches of his own people. Various poems less known, but worth preservation in such a compendium, have been inserted, especially in the present volume—another of its features being the section devoted to our continuation of the "Noted Sayings," many of which are here first collected for reference and quotation. In pursuance of our scheme, American journalism is represented by a few able leaders; but in fact some of our strongest writers have devoted, from choice or necessity, their abilities to newspaper-service. During the later period, frequent credit is given to the magazines and reviews, wherein nowadays a large portion of our noteworthy literature appears before its republication in book-form. It should be mentioned that, owing to the preponderance of theology, history, and politics in our early volumes, it was thought advisable to occupy the later chiefly with an exhibition of the modern rise of "literature proper"—with essays, history, fiction, and poetry. Consequently the great concourse of recent savants, economists, and divines, eminent in the faculties of our colleges and institutes,—among them many near and honored friends of the editors,—is for the most part unrepresented. "Juvenile" books, of which kind there are several "little classics," are excluded, beyond a few selections made for specific reasons.

The gist of the foregoing remarks has been so tersely stated by an able critic,[1] who has reviewed our successive issues with nice discrimination, that it is a pleasure to accept his very language as a summary of the ends which the editors have had in view. He justly says: "It was not their intention merely to indicate by excerpts the masterpieces of American literature, or even to commit themselves to the assertion that at a given period the Ameri-

[1] "M. W. H." of the *New York Sun.*

can people possessed a literature properly so called. Their design, in other words, was historical rather than critical. They meant to exhibit the kind of composition which at this or that period was supposed by the American people, or a section of it, to belong to literature. A searching light would thus be thrown on the stage of taste and cultivation attained by our countrymen at a particular time." . . . Do they (these volumes) not reveal, indeed, the national qualities which Milton, in the Areopagitica, portrayed, when he found the strength of the Motherland to consist in "a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle, and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to."

It is not our province to comment upon the writings displayed in this compilation. Two things, however, will be observed upon a survey of the field: First, the literary activity manifest upon the coming to the front of a generation reared since the civil war; secondly, as respects the characteristics of American literature, that its begetters usually have had something which they wished to say, and therefore have said it with much spontaneity and freedom from affectation. Their works have largely appertained to subjects of interest to the public mind, in their several periods. . . .

At the inception of the work, the senior editor wrote to a friend in Paris: "Among other Herculean diversions, I am editing (with Miss Hutchinson and Arthur) a 'Library of American Literature'—in ten volumes! We have just completed the first two volumes, 'Early' and 'Later' Colonial Literature,—having been exploring that ancestral product, in the catacombs of 1607–1765—and we are all most damnably learned in Narratives, Witchcraft, Theology, Injun Wars, and other Dryasdust matter that would, after all, interest an American of the Americans like yourself. There is some of the worst English, and some of the *best*, in those old fellows. And they had no idea they were writing either kind—which unconsciousness is refreshing, contrasted with modern posing and self-consciousness."

In 1893, he says:

I am greatly pleased by what you so kindly tell me of your experience with the "Library of American Literature." If you will glance at the Preface to the Final Volume (Vol. xi.), which I wrote, you will see that the Editors themselves discovered that they had "*builded better than they knew.*" I have been really surprised by the statements like yours which still come to me, from literary teachers and scholars all over the land. It is remarkable, also, to see how many books, "readers," "anthologies," etc., are being made up, usually by totally incompetent people, with the help of our compilation. However, that is the result of adding a new Encyclopædia or other reference-book, to the public alcoves. In editing the "L. A. L." I didn't think the compilation of much import. It was a side-issue to me, but in the end, I concluded that my labor was not thrown away—that the work conveys a *history*, really, of American thought, life, action, sentiment, from the beginning, and that it will *make for patriotism.* I will send you a little circular, containing about a fiftieth of the opinions of educators, etc., concerning it.

Again, he says, "It now seems a miracle, to me, that we got through such a job at all—without breaking up entirely in judgment and self-poise. The strain was a long one."

On a sheet inscribed in Volume I of Mr. Stedman's set of "A Library of the World's Best Literature" is chronicled:

This Set is *Set No. I* of the *first* Edition de Luxe, which was also the first Edition, of the Warner "Library of the World's Best Literature." I was unable to comply with a request to contribute to the work, owing to my connection with the "Library of American Literature," upon which this "Library" was modelled as to its page, etc. For the same reason I had previously declined the editorship, which was offered to me before it was accepted by my friend Warner. I did subscribe to the work, on condition that I should receive the first set issued from the press. Am preserving these volumes uncut.

The enormous detail involved by a compilation such as "A Library of American Literature" is evident. But to those who are less familiar with Mr. Stedman's ways, the

fastidious care which he expended on all matters of detail may not be so plain. Thousands of letters of inquiry, for permission, for consultation, were written by his own hand; and, he who would not and could not write a slovenly nor hasty letter, infused the same beautiful courtesy throughout the preparation of this work. We have chosen a few of these letters to show the editor directly at his work:

"A LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE."

Editors:
EDMUND C. STEDMAN,
ELLEN M. HUTCHINSON.

45 East 30th Street,
NEW YORK CITY, December 18, 1884.

MR. W. D. HOWELLS,

DEAR SIR: A section of the Library of American Literature will be devoted to authors of a recent date. Many of them already have authorized us to include such specimens of their writings as will best represent them within the limits of our compilation.

We ask your kind permission to use, for the purpose of this work,—

A portion of the Chapter describing the marriage of Bartley and Marcia, in "A Modern Instance."

By and by I shall ask leave to use other things of yours, so as to represent your more poetic side in both verse and prose—

We shall be greatly facilitated *by an early reply*. If our request is granted, you will place us under further obligations *by a line stating the place and date of your birth.*

Respectfully yours, the same old

Please also state which portrait of yourself you would recommend us to use.

E. C. STEDMAN.
(for the Editors)

With the formal and partially printed request of the preceding letter, it was Stedman's custom to add an informal and friendly word. For instance, to Mr. Howells:

We happen to need this permission, as to the Bartley elopement, *now*, and shall write to you about other matters hereafter;

Miss H. requests me to add that we both think "Silas Lapham" promises to be your best work thus far, and that we should ask, instead, for Silas's narrative of his own early career, but for the fact that that novel is still "in course." I want to have you well represented in this compilation—which we hope to make what it should be. Authors and publishers are, without exception thus far, granting our requests of this kind,—and, indeed, why shouldn't they, considering their liberality to all sorts of hackney and amateur compilers?

By the way, I want to say that I never have thought Bartley Hubbard *intrinsically* the utterly bad fellow the reviewers agree in deeming him. He had good points, at first, but his jealous wife was the woman who didn't develop them.

To Miss Edith M. Thomas.

June 29, 1885.

Surely the comity of poets, and the fealty which we all owe to one of the freshest and truest, justify me in addressing you as if we were already somewhat acquainted. Be it known to you, therefore, O Maid of Arcady! that I am in ignorance of your middle-name—though surmising that its initial *M* may stand for Musa, or Maie, or some other nymphonym of song and May-time. If you wish it to remain a matter of surmise, with me and the public, I need not say that I regard a poet's wish, a woman's wish, in such a matter, as absolutely sovereign. But if you are indifferent whether it be known or not, then I should like the privilege of having your name recorded *in full* in the index of a book which I am now sending to press. In either case, pardon me for thus troubling you, since I am—though we have not met—you friend and fellow-singer.

To Horace E. Scudder.

November 25, 1887.

I am obliged to you for recalling my suggestion and request concerning the selections from your writings for our "Library of American Literature"—a most pretentious title, I perceive, in view of the relatively small alcoves into which we have to pack seven or eight generations of authors.

We are now beginning Vol. vii., and *trying* to make estimates for Vol. ix., which will contain (with your assent) some exhibition of

your work. The list of names for that volume is larger than we expected, but happily smaller than that for the 10th and last volume. While I can't say how much more we may in the end ask for, I wish you would now select for us *ten pages* of 500 words each, that being our page-measure in prose. We set 50 lines of verse on a page, in case you have in mind any "metrical equivalents." I would like, in short, to get *your own idea* of the matter that will best represent you in so short a space; and will leave it wholly to you whether it shall be in one extract, or various in theme and style, etc. If you like, you might select 15 or 20 pages, indicating your own preferences by the order of precedence on your list.

Mr. C. A. Dana made the remarkable claim for his "Household Book of Poetry" that it contained *all* the very good minor poems of the language! If he had said all that his space would entertain, he would have been considerably more exact. Still, it is an honor—in one way—to be represented in so compact a book by even a compact selection—an honor which he, my ancient enemy, swore should never be conferred on me. (That is the only oath he is known to have kept.) In some such wise I hope to make our work quite eclectic, and to give some sort of an idea to the reader of any author included. . . .

What an exquisite book of selections from Browning H. M. & Co. have got out! Possibly you edited it. You had his works at Boar's Head, I think.

Mrs. Cavazza has a notable union of fineness and strength in her patrician little mechanism,—scholarship, too, and—what is so rare in women—a delicious vein of humor. She is constantly improving in her work.

I didn't mean to write a letter, but seem to have done so.

To T. W. Higginson.

January 10, 1888.

I heard through a friend that you were ill, and hope I have not added too much to your accumulated burdens. To be ill for a day is putting a dam across the torrent of any well-known man's engagements. How they pile up! Even I am *half-distraught* with the pressure incident to my work (and other people's work) and the season. Many thanks—many—for the Channing matter, which we shall gladly use. I thought I had acknowledged the

condensed "Monarch of Dreams" which is safe in my drawer. If the "Outdoor Papers" are *in print*, I can get the volume, and not put you to any further trouble.

Our minds must be in some sort of *rapport*. I have always been daft on the subject of William Austin, and long since declared to others that he was Hawthorne's progenitor. Two years ago I spent $70 in securing a MS. copy of the *original* version of "Peter Rugg," and reëdited the modern text thereby; and the tale (*entire*) has been stereotyped (our Vol. iv.) since 1885–6, awaiting publication. As we are now in Vol. vii., it will be impossible to use anything else of Austin's.

This letter is somewhat incoherent, but I am greatly driven today. Miss Cleveland tells Mrs. Stedman that you are coming hitherward.

I wish *you* would write a paper on the pressure of "Other People's Business." You say my "vast task." Now, the "Library of American Literature," my other work, my business, social engagements, etc., all together, are not one-half the burden which I find in a terribly increasing mass of correspondence (disconnected with the foregoing) by each mail reaching me. I suppose *your* case is worse still!

To the Same.

August 16, 1888.

I hope 'twill not be quite so grewsome a thing for you to receive a letter in the country, as it is for me to receive "no end" of letters in town. You'd think people would understand that one doesn't stay in this oven, and waste to a skeleton, unless he has *work* that should render him exempt from the queries of vacation-idlers. But this is a necessary business-letter, strictly professional, and concerning such I never growl.

At last I am right upon your date—1823, Vol. viii. As is fitting, you occupy a first rank in space, yet in this volume we are shamefully crowded—and in your *Post* notices you will inevitably wish to know why A. B. & C. are omitted, when D. E. & F. of no higher standing, are represented. My original wish was to quote more largely from your very individual—and for years influential (and still so to be)—critical and opinionative essays and speeches. But your "Monarch of Dreams," so cleverly condensed for us, is worth the space you wish it to occupy: and I readily understand that you

desire this showing of your more creative and ideal side. This, with the poems, gives scant room for the essays, and then, too, you ought to have something to exhibit your views and work concerning Women. And so on, and so on! (e. g. writing and speech-making.)

What I am *able* to do is as follows:

1. An extract from "A Plea for Culture."
2. " " " the next Essay in the same vol.

2½. Passage from "Water-Lilies."

3. Decoration.
4. Monarch of Dreams.
5. To Duty.
6. Passage on Women not (as a class) Demanding Suffrage—"In Common-Sense."
7. Extract from that "Nervous Fluid" speech or essay.
8. Waiting for the Bugle.
9. A Song of Days.

I *wish* to get in *all* of these, but may have to omit one or more.

While I am writing, the "copy" for these is in other hands. Hence my vague titles. But I write this letter to ask two questions:

1. Among the various MSS., etc., which you sent me was, I am sure, another poem, signed, in your own writing, and one of particular moment to you and to me. *That* special roc's egg, I blush to say, I can't find, but am sure my secretary has mislaid it in an effort to keep it *very* safe. What *was* that poem? Shall we substitute it for one of the Nos. 5, 8?

2. "That one drop of nervous fluid," in which, as I think, *rem acu tetigisti:* in what book or magazine, or where else, can I find it? . . .

Pray answer these two questions, briefly, and I'll not trouble you again.—O, but, can you tell me *where* Anne Whitney (about 1820) was born, and if she is still living? Authorities are silent. I want to use her "Bertha."

About women's ages—which are a standing "concern" upon your mind. In the "Poets of America" I DID, and in the "Library of American Literature," we do, give their ages, of course, *wherever there is any oral or scriptural authority for a date.* But I don't feel bound to *ask* any woman how old she is, and should not do so if it were my plain duty. Besides: would the answer of the average

woman, in the present stage of her development, be really authoritative?

For the first time, strange as it may seem, I have found a chance to read "Ramona"; and I thoroughly agree with a sentence of yours, somewhere, to the effect that it was the most striking American romance since the date of "The Scarlet Letter." H. H.'s genius had ripened and broadened when she wrote it. The scenes, characters, action, *atmosphere*, are wonderful. Now, if those *last* poems of Mrs. Jackson's, in the *Century*, had appeared when I wrote my book, I should have said something different of her poetry. To my mind, those two pages were worth any score of pages in "Verses by H. H."—"Ramona" has precisely the qualities which the *body* of those Verses *lack*, viz: *picturesqueness*, *movement*, *dramatic quality*, *color*. There is a *monotone*, although *she* had such a varied personality, restricting her poetry, a persistent seriousness—which lessens its value, despite its deep feeling and subtility of thought. It is rarely joyous: it is not *finely* lyrical, as a whole. But her death-bed poems! Those were noble, impassioned, exalted.

To H. H. Furness.

January 7, 1889.

Since receiving your kind permission to include extracts from your writings in our "Library," I have reëxamined with some care the volumes thus far issued of your noble Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. So much of your *scholia* and commentary are necessarily the work of other editors than you that, as you foresaw, it is difficult to succeed in an attempt to do *you* any sort of justice by using your *capo d'opera* as a basis.

Now, how can any presentation of American Literature be adequate, if we cannot make some kind of a "showing" with respect to our really eminent scholars—such as Professor Child and yourself? Yet you two are precisely the authors concerning whom the Editor of a *compilation* experiences the most embarrassment.

Kindly, then, my dear Mr. Furness, *put us on the track of some of your essays, contributions to magazines or reviews, etc.*

Now that I am writing, I remember that some time ago I gave a common friend my *extra* copy of dear old Horne's "Shylock and Jessica," to hand you as a little contribution to your resources. I trust it reached you safely?

To the Same.

January 14, 1889.

I am vastly obliged to you for the honor and pleasure of your two letters, the first of which is precisely what I hoped to gain by my own letter—even "from the extremest shore of your modesty." And I will confess that I half believed you would refer me to that brilliant *tour* of critical analysis, the parallel between the Shakespearean and Æschylean methods. I do not share in the commonplace belief that an able workman is not a competent judge of his own quality, his own success or failure. That rule perhaps applies to vacillating and experimental draughtsmen, not to men of sure touch. Your date of birth brings you, in our compilation, among a number of "light-weights." I cannot persuade myself to truncate or disembowel so creative and thorough an *excursus*, therefore I shall induce Miss Hutchinson to share my wish to use the whole of it—and thereby bring up the quality of our early pages in Vol. ix. And of course we shall use your quiet and fully adequate "disposition" of the Shakespeare-Bacon lunacy.

Yes, indeed—I had closely examined the Merchant-of-Venice volume; and I saw the Horne citations. But I couldn't help asking if my copy of "Shylock" had been your text-book. It was Harry Edwards, I really believe, to whom I gave my pamphlet copy—for *you*—chancing also to possess a duplicate, bound up with dear old "Orion" Horne's "Gregory VII" and "The Death of Marlowe," and inscribed (as I think your copy was) by Horne's own octogenarian hand. The author of "Orion" and "Marlowe" I knew and loved in his wonderful old age. He and Landor were of the British Titans, and among the last of them.

Well, I shall have it out with Harry Edwards. Doubtless he failed to seize my wish that you might in some way find even a mouse's aid in my little contribution. But he, if he it was, certainly came to me with the question whether "Shylock" was in my Horne collection, and, if so, whether I would not lend it to him for your use.

I did see extracts from your Seybert Report, possibly in the *Evening Post*. It will give me pleasure to possess a copy sent by its author.

Since I am in touch with you, here is a little story: Professor Edmund Gosse, writing me two years ago, from London, said: "Of course you are beginning to do some interesting imaginative

work in America, but you can not rival us in scholarly production based upon literary research, as you haven't the facilities there, etc." To which I requested him to mark how plain a tale should put him down. I rejoined that at that moment the two most important works, purely literary and exhibiting the fruits of scholarly research, publishing in the English language were—Professor Child's new Variorum edition of his British Ballads, and Mr. Furness's Variorum Shakespeare. Gosse, to do him justice, acknowledged that never was a rejoinder more crushing.

To Donald G. Mitchell.

January 28, 1889.

Pardon you? Ay, and embrace you too, for quietly—in your scholarly way—pointing out such a fearsome blunder, before some newspaper microscopist succeeds in focusing it!

Pride goeth before destruction. We were upon the edge, in our chronological pride, (for I worked hard and long for *accuracy* and sometimes it took months to verify one date), of offering the same $5. for each blunder found that the publishers of the "Revised Version" offer for each typographical error.

I verily believe, after some research, that you are right *in re* Benjamin Woodbridge—that the true Amphytyron was the great W. (1622–84) and not the Bristol parson whose birth I cannot find, but who died in 1710—doubtless prematurely, as I believe the Lawrence family were not then distilling rum in Medford. And your old Medford has greater antiseptic qualities. Where did you find any record of the younger Benjamin's birth? You give the date thereof as 1645, but 'tis not in Savage, for instance.

Duyckinck, with you, attributes the poem on Cotton to Harvard's first graduate. *Per contra*, Allibone (a faulty authority, I find—though useful through his inclusiveness) absolutely declares that the *younger* Woodbridge wrote these lines. Take a look at Allibone. Through his felonious misguidance, evidently, we fall into the pit from which you deliver us.

For I accept the Moses and Joshua tribute to Norton, in the closing lines of the "Sower," as conclusive internal evidence of your correctness—i. e. if you are *sure* that the younger Woodbridge was not born until 1645. We can readily alter the plates of our Volume i., for future editions, but it will of course make a bad "fault" in our chronological stratum. All the same, a thou-

sand thanks. We shall send you in a day or two some proofs of a portrait we have been making of you. It is a good piece of engraver's work, but tell me how it strikes you. We had to *create* the lower portion of the figure—as 'twas all obscure in the photograph.

To H. H. Furness.

February 9, 1889.

Your latest letter, with the photograph of a man who—if he were set to tune pianos—would tune them *well*, would have been acknowledged at once, had I not been in Hartford (a very thoroughbred town) and booked for a speech in the Halls of my Ancestors. The which, in much awe of their Manes, having been delivered, I now am not sorry for the delay; since it enables me to send you the *revised* proof-pages of the selections taken from your Commentary. We don't take such pains with the commonalty. But as to scholar's work, I have said in my pride: there shall be "no error in this book." Our proof-readers, and my secretary, have done their best work with your pages. Instead of giving them *my* final reading, I bethink myself to send them to you—to see if you find any feathers awry upon your own chickens. There's no eye like a parent's. I have made, of malice aforethought, but two changes from your text. One was, to substitute the acute accent for your "smooth-breathing," in τοδ', p. 66; the other (since we follow Worcester in the L. A. L.) to knock the *u* out of "rumour," p. 69. But I call your attention to the fact that you quote "rumors to live unchecked," as if that precise phrase were Shakespeare's. *Is it?*

I thought "It hath the Excuse of Youth" a good title for your Bacon passage. What say you?

We shall try to make a good portrait from the photograph—though 'tis not artistic as to lights and shades.

In re the Seybert Report! This is positively delightful—another learned scholar who forgets that he has eaten his dinner! The Report has been *on my table* for two weeks—a presentation-copy with your sign-manual therein—and with the pages dog-eared at each one of *your* contributions. I will not venture, at this early stage of our friendship, to suggest that you may have just returned from that preposterous *Clover Club*, when you mailed it; but if you *had*, the Spirits you defied irreverently certainly have had their re-

venge upon you—attacking so successfully that Memory which is the "warder of the brain."

To James Herbert Morse.

June 18, 1889.

Pray tell me where I can find ("right away,") the poem you read—that delightful evening of the *tableaux*. I don't find it in the "Summer Haven Songs." If not printed, could you lend me the *MS?* Is there any other poem, as yet "uncollected," to which you would care to refer us?

We are having a hard time, to make any equable showing of our *many* younger poets in our crowded later volumes. Looks as if we should have to give one specimen of each—*the* one, of course.

To Horace E. Scudder.

July 18, 1889.

I have carried your letter in my pocket for two days, but could not find a moment, until these presents, in which to reply. It is very strongly impressed upon my (just now rather waxen) memory, that either you or the editor of your "Men of Letters" (Warner?) requested me, some time ago, to consider the advisability of including Richard Grant White in that series, and the possibility of my writing his *libellus*. Furthermore, that I rather believed in the former, and was sure the latter did not exist.

However, you are right and wise in applying to me for the "miniature" sketch suggested, because, first, No man was less rated-at-worth during life, and in his own craft and neighborhood than R. G. W.—though, to be sure, this was largely his own whimsical and erratic fault. Still, if he had lived in Cambridge, he would have acted differently, and under any circumstances have been rated very high and very broad. But, second, I probably knew him more nearly as he *was* than any other fellow-writer and student now at work. I was with him on the editorial staff of the *World;* I chanced to live next door to him for some years, and was one of the few whom he *visited-with*, and our families were and are "on terms." I knew his real strength. The public chiefly knew his weaknesses. *You* plainly appreciate his versatility, his *literary* common-sense, his remarkable powers. And he *was* a patriot, from top to toe (a long measure in *his* case.)

Yet I must say, absolutely, No, to your request, as I have too

many commissions this year. We are on the "home-stretch" with the elephantine "Library of American Literature," and are making our final volumes 600 pages each, in smaller type,—and are to have an eleventh vol. with biographical notices, etc. The labor is *severe*—many authors, many woes. It keeps me a perfect *slave*. . . . I cannot spare one day, one professional hour, until the job shall be ended. The printers are steadily at my heels. My down-town business is all at odds and ends. . . .

The ridge-house, with the marsh-view, would seem Paradise to me just now. This letter is another cry of Dives to Lazarus—except that I have none of Dives's claims to his name. . . . How I long for the down-East water and breezes!

We are vastly indebted to you for all your patient kindnesses, *in re* the "Library of American Literature."

Vol. ix. will be out about September 1, illuminated by your portrait and writings. Well, for once you have rightful treatment —i. e. as far as I could do justice to *any one* in our well-filled pages. Query? Shall I have a friend left, among those *in* or those *out* of this strange compendium?

To Henry Holt.

July 29, 1889.

A suggestion, and a query. Ought not the author of "Democracy" to be represented in the great, lasting, standard and Only "Library of American Literature"? Secondly, *Ought* he or she to be represented? My answer to both of these questions is Yes, decidedly: if the author is an American *by birth*, or *since early youth*.

Now, in the cases of one or other distinguished *Anonymi* and *Anonymæ*, I finally wrote directly to them, stating that if they would take my word that the facts as to their American or foreign *nativity* should be kept sacredly within my own knowledge—that *not even my co-editor* should know them—I would gladly be informed as to this sole point. Each replied that he or she was willing to trust Mr. Stedman to that extent, and told me whether I could quote the works in question as *American* literature.

You will see, at once, that I am writing solely in the interest of our compilation. I shall be very glad to include therein an extract from "Democracy," if *you* tell me I can legitimately do so. And I promise you that your reply shall be carefully hidden from the eyes of all mankind and womankind—and you will observe

that I do not copy this strictly confidential note in our letter-book. Address your letter as "Private," to me at my *house*, 44 East Twenty-sixth Street. There is just one contingency I ought to mention. If the author is a *well-known American writer*—he or she probably *is* represented elsewhere in the compilation—I can send you a general list of our authors, if need be.

To H. H. Furness.

August 31, 1889.

Just a line to tell you how vertically we little editors were "set up" by your recent letter: a line that would have reached you ere now, were it not that my superb and long-abused eyesight has at last given out (small blame to it!) and it has been with pain, and with specialized spectacles, that I've written the letters that *must* be written.

Even writing to you is—like the kiss with which Undine slew her disloyal husband—a "blissful pain."

Of course I am glad that our Volume viii. interested you. "We strive," first of all, "to please." It is very "inclusive," but the little writers show which way the wind blew, and made a background for the main figures. (There's a noble mixing of metaphors for you.) But I find Volume ix., soon to reach you, still more entertaining. 'Tis pleasant sometimes, to emerge from a conspicuous but venerable *chestnut*-grove and wander through the nurseries of oaks and tulip-trees still growing. H. H. Furness, and other youngsters, will entertain you in the forthcoming volume. No: this year I have *no* vacation. The L. A. L. keeps me

In dura catena,
In misera pœna,

but I am, nathless, and always, faithfully yours.

To Constance F. Woolson.

September 2, 1889.

I must write this letter before "the Tuscan vines and olives" surrender you to the haunts of the Edelweiss. In truth, I have been hesitating whether to write briefly, and at once, or to wait until my eyes permit me to say all that I should think might interest you. . . . One can dictate business letters, but when Constance Woolson receives a typewritten letter from me—I say with

Sir John Manners—May the Lord forget me! (Sheridan, I think, said "Never—He'll see you d—d first!") These presents are, then, to thank you warmly for your letter of August 10th, and with specific warmth for the two photographs, which have come in perfect condition. Like you, I prefer for our use the profile view, though 'tis a pity 'tis slightly blurred in photographic *re*production from the (N. H.) original. Our best engraver, who already has it in hand, tells me that he can make the outline a little clearer, and I hope to send you some "proofs before letter" of a satisfactory picture. Now we were congratulating ourselves that we should issue a fresh picture of you—having chosen the one unused by *Harper's*—when comes a request to my son Arthur, from *Scribner's*, to write a brief biography or sketch of C. F. W.—to accompany a portrait of you in the October *Book-Buyer*, from the "profile portrait"! So, being forestalled, I can only avenge myself by getting up a nicer portrait than theirs. Well, my chagrin will not creep into Arthur's sketch you may be sure, and it is tempered by the fact that the rivalry all increases the fame of my most honored woman-friend.

Now, as to your verbal "representation" in our portentous but (I trust) enduring "Library." Mistress E. Hutchinson and I *each* have the veto-power as editors. That is the way we get along. Of course I defer greatly to her taste in the matter of her fellow-crafts*women*. We long since agreed to represent tale-makers, when practicable, by complete "short stories," in preference to taking chapters or episodes from their *novels*. Of course your greatest work is in your novels. But when we find a perfect and dramatic short-story, which is so rare, we both rejoice and jump for it. The *best* short-stories, since Hawthorne, with American themes and atmosphere, are yours and Bret Harte's. I *hope* you have not lived long enough yet to undervalue your "Peter the Parson" or "The Lady of Little Fishing." I have lately reread them both, and think more highly of them than ever.

But to change the topic. Never tell me again that you are a "realist." That word, and "romancer," are merely terms. I wish you could see my Preface to the (revived) issue of Mrs. Stoddard's novels. I will enclose, at least, a copy of one portion of it, show you *my* briefly stated view of the realism-romanticism conflict. It amounts to nothing, except that all "school" conflicts are *stimulating*—as was that of Hugo's romanticism with the classi-

cists, when *Hernani* was produced. You are what God made you—a woman of taste, industry, insight, *plus* genius; and *your* so-called realistic method is charged no less with passion and imagination. 'Tis a poor workman who can't use any tool. Forgive this digressional preachment. I think you must have returned to the graye goose quille of the romance-period, by the change in your handwriting. It has become veritably Byronic in its vigorous abandon, and I scarcely recognized it at first.

So there is one full-brained person left who *believes* with her "whole heart" in another life? Of late I have not met another. All mankind and womankind have lost their Faith, and like Young Goodman Brown, our end is gloom—and our life *Omar-Khayyamicism*. A quotation in Mallock's "New Republic" states the case exactly: "They have taken away our Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Poetry? I write perchance one poem a year—when I absolutely can't help it: that's all. You like "The Star-Bearer"? 'Tis my one stained-glass poem. "Peter the Parson," you know. But didn't you see the crowning honor and pleasure of my magazine-life: to have my ballad of Morgan, superbly illustrated by Pyle, *next* to *your* story in last December's *Harper's?* At last, for one month, *we* were mated! And 'twas a live ballad, too; and Tom Aldrich said there *was* one excuse for Alden's putting it in a Christmas issue,—it had the word "Jesu" in it. I wrote recently a poem to go with Fortuny's "Spanish Lady" in the *Century*. Perhaps I'll send it to you this Fall. Otherwise, not a line for *myself* in a year past: but letters, letters, and reading second-rate American "literature" have made me weary, poor, and gray. This year, I am earning a scanty living down-town and going like a slave *every* afternoon to the "Library" office—you see we are rushing the work through the press, under contract. My "leisure moments." Why it has taken *all* my time for some years, bad cess to it! . . .

My wife loves you, and we often speak of you. *Can* it be ten years! Well, you have had an ideal life, and I am content to know it. Laura has stayed in this hot town all summer to take care of Arthur and me. 'Tis our last year of thraldom. "Kelp Rock" is rented to strangers. We are alone in New York—not a friend left in town. If I live through, and don't lose my vital powers, as I have lost my money and eye-sight, I shall try to enter upon a philosophic afternoon of life.

Testimonials concerning "A Library of American Literature" came from all parts of the Country:

Oak Knoll, Danvers, 9/18 1888.

My dear Friend:

Since writing thee I have had an opportunity to examine more carefully the "Library of American Literature." The plan and execution seem to me deserving of unqualified praise.

If it is deemed best to have a portrait of myself in the work—some of my friends wish it to be from a painting (at the age of 27) by Bass Otis, a pupil of Gilbert Stuart, for which I gave a sitting or two in Philadelphia, and which has recently come to light after fifty years or more. If it is desirable I will get a photograph of it and send it.

I think thee and Miss Hutchinson are deserving of national thanks for demonstrating the fact that America has a Literature distinctly her own. Even thy first volume shows this. A breath of the New World blows through it.

I am gratefully thy friend,

John G. Whittier.

Beverly Farms, July 18, 1888.

My dear Stedman,

I am delighted with your project and must hope that I shall live long enough to see the series completed. I have always been very grateful to the Duyckincks for their "Cyclopedia," which was most useful and acceptable in its day, but which must yield its place as a Compendium of our National Literature to your larger, and I feel sure that it must be, more critical and authoritative work. I am very glad that you have been willing to undertake the labour and responsibility of so considerable a performance. I should have been one of the first of your subscribers if you had not threatened to deprive me of that privilege by sending me the volumes. The only trouble you will have will be modesty about inserting too many of your own poems and essays. Don't be afraid,—they will take the places of other productions which would not be half as good. Believe me dear Mr. Stedman

Faithfully and cordially yours,

O. W. Holmes.

These words were received from William Winter: "This Compendium of American Literature is a monument of

Genius and Industry. A prodigious vitality is felt in these pages, and over all there is the firm control of liberal, judicious, unerring taste. These volumes will be of immense service to our country and to the cause of Education."

And from H. N. Powers: "I shall not venture to write much now, but first of all I want to congratulate you on the accomplishment of your great undertaking—'A Library of American Literature.' It is a work of which you may be justly proud. You have the satisfaction not only of seeing the successful labors of your hands, but in feeling the blessed relief which accompanies the termination of this tremendous enterprise. It is a monument of vast industry, accurate knowledge, exquisite taste, consummate ability, and exalted moral principle. I hope to say something on the subject in the *Dial* hereafter. You have now, I trust, a consciousness of intellectual freedom in which you will be able to realize some of the dreams of your literary ambitions and hopes."

"The selections have been made with excellent judgment, and the editorial work has been admirably done. The book will be of great service to the student of American History and American Literature," wrote Professor John Fiske.

"I am glad to say that I consider Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman's *Library of American Literature* the most valuable work of the kind printed in the English language. No library ought to be without it; I find it invaluable as a reference book. It is in almost daily use at the University and St. Mary's. It is unique, thorough; it is the work of our first American critic, and the greatest, after Whittier, of our poets, assisted by the foremost literary woman of our country."—Such was Maurice Francis Egan's opinion.

The London *Times* found that "These volumes are a revelation to many Americans and to more Englishmen. They are rich in information and entertainment. In this panorama in print we may read the rise and growth of the great Republic, as we see in the shifting of successive transformation

scenes the reflection of its geographical as well as its social characteristics."

From James Whitcomb Riley.

January 6, 1891.

Your beautiful consideration of the Child's book I've ventured to put forth, reaches a sensibility of gratitude I cannot hope to express to you in any voice. All I can do is to *say* I am grateful and with closed eyes blindly hope some vibrant volts of it may tingle to and through you, as through the poet's *morning* heart—

"There palpitations wild and sweet—
The thrills of many an old delight,
With dimpled hands that lightly meet,
And hearts that tremble to unite,—
Arise upon that rosy morn,
Pass down the lovely vales and stand,
The picture of a memory born,
The mirage of a lotus land—
The land where first we trolled the song,
'Tis morning and the days are long!"

In so many unspeakable ways am I made your debtor I seem whelmed about with *tumultuous* silences,—so you've secured yourself beyond all corresponding hail of cheer or blithe ahoy of mine. —That's *something* like the situation anyhow, and thus, for my own sake, I am grieved even as I exult. But God bless you for your generous words to me—and if *too generous* your good heart is, as half I fear—God keep it so and humor you and anchor me alongside for all time!

For the fine presentation of my homely home-spun verses in your recently completed compilation with Miss Hutchinson accept my thanks, forgetting not whatever growth of finer worth they have, or may betray is the result, in part direct, of your interest and influence. To Miss Hutchinson, as well, my praise and thanks. Your mutual effort seems to me the best grounded, the most carefully elaborated and perfected work of the character in my knowledge.

Yet, with you, I half-way sigh and wonder when they, or we, who keep you a slave to prose, will give you gracious pause in which to give us another book of verse. Ah! my dear, dear friend, lift

voice again and sing! That is your truest glory—and the world's. And there is such vast need, too, for the deep voice, and the sound enduring tones that fail not as the chirps and trills and twitter of our junketers of singers nowadays. Therefore, surely you *are* to sing again—for lo, where fare thy lordly fellows and where fail their footsteps in the neighboring shades? Again God bless and keep you still forever young of heart and soul.

From E. M. H., the Junior Editor:

And now you may go a-wandering in the Forest of Arden and may wile the loveliest songs off the bushes, and the wisest books from the running brooks, and lectures from everything!

And don't let me see "E. C. S. the Senior Editor" more;—but the Poet, the man of "Genius," the kind friend and comrade. Forget the drudgery; and remember the gods have made *thee* poetical.

I feel sure that you are going to do the most perfect and beautiful work of your life now that the L. A. L. is behind you.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NATURE AND ELEMENTS OF POETRY

STEDMAN's lifelong office and interest was the appreciative criticism or valuation of Poetry. Whether in creation or estimation he aimed to found it upon solid and enduring principles. To have recognized its bourgeoning with equal justice and sympathy was the merit of an unfailing keenness of mind and kindness of heart. Not more than one other, it is admitted, has written more discriminatingly and largely of the conditions and origins of the poetic art, and none more generously of the offerings of individual poets. In the three volumes he has left, begun, so swiftly does time pass, now a generation ago, there may be gleaned a rare answer to the perennial mystery of the increasing interest in poetry in an age devoted chiefly to science and material progress. That answer came, not from the cold aloofness of the erudite and official judge, but from the vivid understanding and love of a fellow-worker in an art demanding a sensitive, generous, and responsive spirit. "The poet studies in his own atelier"—to use Stedman's words. With capital pertinence Professor Woodberry has lately written: "It is a widespread error, and due only to the academic second-hand practice of poetry, to oppose the poet to the man of action, or assign to him a merely contemplative rôle in life, or in other ways deny reality to the poet's experience; intensity of living is preliminary to all great expression."

In 1857, Stedman wrote to his Mother a letter [1] which, of course, was meant for her alone, upon the nature, aims and workmanship of the Poet. Holding in mind that it was written off-hand, by a twenty-four year old young man, in the year 1857, one's wonder grows with every reading at the keeness of critical judgment and largeness of view which

[1] See Volume I, Chapter VI.

characterize it. His conclusions in the most mature lectures and essays written years later in life, and designed for publication, are in many respects not better conceived and stated. An astonishing intellectual acumen vies with a passionate idealism in this letter.

The two earlier volumes, "Victorian Poets," and "The Poets of America," were the logical forerunners of the treatise forming the *Percy Graeme Turnbull* Lectures under the title of "The Nature and Elements of Poetry," of which the Contents are: Oracles Old and New, What is Poetry? Creation and Self-Expression, Melancholia, Beauty, Truth, Imagination, The Faculty Divine (Passion, Insight, Genius, Faith).

During the preparation of these books one finds repeated and pathetic mention of the "prolonged illness," delays, etc., encountered by this many-sided "man of action," who was certainly guilty of "intensity of living."

In a letter, 1887, to Professor Charles F. Richardson, Stedman says:

> My books on the modern English and American poets were written chiefly to give vent to long-cherished ideas of the canons of poetry and art in general—the poets themselves were merely my texts for preachment on "What I know about" Poetry. Having had my say, I am content, and want to return to my mêtier—song itself.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> As there *is* a kind of statistical thread running through my critical books, I have had to make mention of more contemporary groups and individuals than I wished. This seemed all right, when I was pointing out *tendencies* and *fashions* in England; but when mentioning the juniors here it seems all wrong. . . . Doubtless, like me, you have strong personal likings and dislikes, but I think you also have my experience—to wit, that the touch of the pen at once enables you to get rid of the personal factor and work objectively.

On December 5, 1889, Mr. Stedman received an invitation from Professor Ira Remsen, Acting President of Johns Hop-

kins University, to deliver the opening Course of Lectures on Poetry in the Lectureship founded in memory of their son Percy Graeme Turnbull, by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Turnbull, of Baltimore, Maryland. In declining the offer Stedman replied, in part, as follows:

Like all other notable opportunities of my illogical life, the occasion has come too late—or at the wrong time. It was only a Beecher who could deliver off-hand a great course of Yale lectures —and even then it was but an extension of his practice of Preaching. Nothing could induce me to proffer you a superficial, hastily-conceived series. To formulate mentally what I think concerning poetry would require time, and then a year of freedom from other work would be needed for the embodiment.

You may know something of our voluminous "Library of American Literature"? Within eighteen months I have carried through *publication*, almost single-handed, ten 8vo. volumes; and am now at the very culmination of the work, which will not be completed before *next May*. This labor, and private troubles, have so exhausted me that the physicians forbid me to accept any new engagements. They prescribe that unattainable thing—a year of "absolute rest."

I have written so personally, and at such length, to convey more fully my sense of *loss*. You must tender this grand privilege to some younger, worthier, more fortunate man. I bespeak a brilliant future, and many a noteworthy printed treatise, for the lectureship on Poetry at Johns Hopkins.

To Mrs. Turnbull he also wrote:

Until your letter came I did not know that your and your husband's endowment of the lectureship was as a memorial expression of the ideal which you had conceived for your gifted and noble boy. It is rarely that I have known men or women capable of designing such an expression. Nothing could be more exquisite. It is all *so* rare and unusual, that I should undertake the office of initiating your work with a sense of reverence, of possible unworthiness; yet with certain enthusiasm—like that of a knight receiving his accolade and mission from very royal hands.

Your letter has only increased my sorrow that it will not be my great honor to open this first American lectureship on the chief

of inspired arts—to the natural love and humble study of which all my *better* life has been devoted.

The word "impossible" is seldom used by me; in truth, I scarcely have acknowledged that sometimes, as in the present instance, it is not stronger than a man's wish and will. That it is simply *beyond my power* to respond to your call is what I have tried to explain to Professor Remsen in the letter of which I enclose a copy. But I wish to impress upon Mr. Turnbull and yourself my profound, lasting appreciation of your service to our art and ideality, and of the very great honor you have proffered *me*. Let me add that the one condition made by you, as to the spirit of the lectures, must be thoroughly in accord with the instinct and reason of any true poet. That the *laws* of beauty are eternal, and that the Universal God is the Master Artist,—this even a modern impressionist, if he has any gift of his own, must feel in his heart of hearts.

The refusal was reconsidered and on March 19, 1890, Stedman wrote to Mrs. Turnbull:

My friends were somewhat alarmed (and I shared a little of their feeling) at the extreme disappointment expressed by Professor Remsen, in his announcement, that Mr. Lowell was unable to give the opening course, and that he was compelled to offer a substitute. Upon reading this we felt the full meaning of Shakespeare's words: "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo." No living man can hope to make amends for the wit, the learning, the diamond-tipped prose speech of my beloved friend and master, James Russell Lowell. I had not heard of the request and belief that he would initiate the lectures, when I finally assented to Professor Remsen's second invitation. This, however, would have made not the slightest difference in my action, as it is honor enough for any man to come next to Lowell; and my assent was given, and my plans for 1890 changed, solely from a sense of duty and a warmth of feeling induced by your own beautiful letters. Still, Professor Remsen's announcement gave me a realizing sense of the fact that I shall go to Baltimore somewhat heavily "handicapped." Your renewed assurances are my best encouragement in an attempt—not to fill the place of Mr. Lowell —but yet to do something that will not be quite unworthy of so ideal a lectureship and of its honored founders.

Writing to Professor C. F. Richardson, April 16, 1890, we find him still in doubt:

For I need such encouragement to resist, even now, the impulse to back out of my engagement. I could not refuse to prepare the lectures, after the Johns Hopkins dignitaries voted me a year's time. Again, the notion of a Poetry "Foundation" at such an American University seemed to me quite ideal: for, as you say, the whole trend of our College policy has been toward scholastic analysis, philology, etc., and scornful of ideality and generalization. But I am just at the laborious close of a big piece of "book-making," as you know, and had vowed that I would not enter upon any engagement that would keep me from *life* and from poem-*making*. Here I am, with eight or ten lectures to prepare in eight months—the time slipping by—and I, at work on the *Index* of the "Lib. Amer. Lit."! Well, well! I heartily wish *you* were to give the initiatory Turnbull course, and that I could go—a-trouting! But I am none the less grateful for your handsome God-speed.

And to Professor M. F. Egan, July 17, 1890: "I am tackling my eight Johns Hopkins lectures on Poetry—a subject I'm tired of writing *about;* and I'm sure my work will seem tame to me after reading your sparkling lectures. Let us both write a little more poetry ourselves, now! One kiss is worth a dozen essays on Love! (But I suppose that would be dangerous heresy at Notre Dame?)"

Despite serious illnesses and trials the lectures were delivered in the Spring of 1891, and invitations arrived to repeat them at other Universities, Clubs, Societies, etc. They were given the next year at Columbia, and also at the University of Pennsylvania. They were first published in the *Century Magazine*, and were issued in book form in 1892, by Houghton, Mifflin & Company.

To Frank Dempster Sherman.

January 25, 1891.

It is quite time that I should thank you for your careful attention to my request *in re* the Chair of Poetry. It is something, then, to be recorded as the first lecturer of the Second Foundation, though

my feeling now is that the fame resulting to *me* will be very much like that earned by "th' aspiring Youth that fired th' Ephesian Dome!" That is to say, I feel that my lectures, because *written* and *read*, if for no other reason, will be deemed dull and perfunctory.

I note your additional kindness, as to the possible opportunity of delivering them at Columbia. My dear boy, if Columbia is wise—and she is now a Centuri*anne*—she will commit Herself to nothing of the kind until the Maryland Deestric' has been heard from. The lectures may prove a disastrous failure. I feel now as if they *must* prove so. Better "bide a wee," for your sake and mine. But I very much appreciate your warm-heartedness, and indeed in many ways you have got into my affections.

Poor Lüder's end was pathetically swift, after all. Six of our near acquaintances died last week: when you reach my age, it will seem to you as if old Mors Pallida fired with a Gatling gun.

At the close of the series of Lectures at Johns Hopkins, Mr. Stedman said extemporaneously:

I came to you, who are yourselves so much more deeply grounded in essential facts than an old-time student can be, and who are privileged to listen to some of the most brilliant scholars and investigators of our time,—I came in a spirit of unaffected deference, almost of timidity. Your President at the outset, and with him your teachers of science and language from first to last, have made me feel that the wisest are the kindliest. And as for you, it is enough for me to say that your attentive faces have made me grateful, and also envious of your vantage-ground. One of my years, to be a student at this liberal and onward-looking University, would gladly surrender whatever he has gained in life and take Life's chances over again—yes, would even listen to lectures under compulsion!

The feeling of President Gilman is shown in the following excerpt from a letter dated November 9, 1892:

I have taken the first quiet afternoon that I have been able to command, since I received a beautiful bound copy of your inspiring lectures,—and I have gone over the volume from its opening inscription (which gratified me extremely) even through the index, that I might not escape any point. I have even read the

running captions and the marginal key-words which serve the eye as your sympathetic intonations served the ear when the lectures were delivered. May I tell you once more that I am sure we were very fortunate in enlisting you as the first lecturer of the Foundation. You have struck a keynote which will certainly affect the music of all our coming orchestra. Critical but not censorious,—optimistic but not sentimental, strong and inspiring but not sensational, you enunciate the literary canons to which all subsequent lecturers must consciously or unconsciously revert. When you were here, we were all inspired and pleased by your discourse. It is a great satisfaction to find that the interest is kept up as the eye takes in from the printed page what the ear received from your voice.

A multitude of eulogistic letters poured in; Bishop Potter wrote:

Singularly enough, four of us (the Bishops of Connecticut, Minnesota, Albany, and myself,) were reading with keen appreciation of its singular and felicitous delineations, your tribute to the Prayer Book,—in Baltimore, the other day, and I wish you could have heard the terms in which your fine and penetrating analysis of the characteristics of that book, was spoken of. It is but a single instance of a literary vision so bright and clear as to make the whole volume a rare boon to those who have the capacity to receive its message; and I rejoice to believe that these are daily an increasing number. I thank you with all my heart for what you have done for them, and for me.

Horace Howard Furness said:

I cannot tell you how delighted I am to have those invaluable Lectures in this permanent and accessible form. They have ceased to be the property of those only, who have ears to hear, and I now at last can revel in their exquisite discussions, their keen, subtle sympathetic analyses. You don't know how thirstily I used to question every one who was happy enough to hear them. There is not another man in this country whose word is as potent on this subject or as authoritative, as yours—and if this book doesn't do good and bear fruit, making fairer the literary life of this time in this country we'd better burn our libraries and shoot our publishers (no bad idea at any time!)

Pertinent, also, is the noteworthy opinion of the Master of the Critic-Craft written at a later date:

THE PINES, 11, Putney Hill, S. W.
7th September, 1909.

DEAR MISS STEDMAN,

The letters to your revered grandfather are by far the most interesting letters that Algernon ever wrote. Their autobiographical nature makes them of great value, and if I should find strength to write about him I shall ask your permission to use them liberally. I am, however, so very ill and depressed by the loss of the dearest friend any man ever had that this seems to me a somewhat remote project.

I fully share Mr. Swinburne's great admiration of your grandfather's work, both in poetry and prose. As far as I can judge, your countrymen, although giving him his proper place as a critic, give him as a poet among your poets a far lower place than Swinburne and I always thought should be given to him, and we have often wondered why. Perhaps it is because of his great success as a critic. But a poet-critic is a poet before he is a critic, and must be so. His place among your poets should be of the highest. He was a man greatly beloved in England, and by none more than myself. I shall look forward eagerly to your biography of him, and should you ever be coming to this country I hope we may meet.

With kindest regards,
Believe me to be,
Most sincerely yours,
THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

From Richard Hovey.

Christmas, 1893.

"There's none knows like a fellow of the craft," says Browning —and there is no pleasure in any praise like that in his.

I believe that art is not for art's sake but for life's sake; and that, while there cannot be too much art in it (when it seems so, it is because there is too little), the final test for poetry, as for all things, is, "Does it enrich our relation to the universe?" I think this is a platform broad enough to exclude alike the narrower interpretations of mere didacticism and mere æstheticism. I wonder if a good deal of the decadence of our minor poetry is not due to the fact that some hope to reach successful results more by writing

like artists than by living like men. The Muse, like most ladies, likes something stalwart in her wooers, and gets bored by too sighing a devotion. Of course, she must be loved, but after the fashion of Hotspur.

> Humpty Dumpty mended a quill,
> Humpty Dumpty is sucking it still
>
> For all the King's horses, and all the King's men
> Cannot get poetry out of a pen.

In further illustration of Stedman's own opinions the following selections from letters may be cited:

To Sidney Lanier.

May 17, 1880.

Let me congratulate you, and all of us, upon the heroic industry, and the profound rhythmical analysis, which have enabled you to render so complete this most scientific—this wholly unique work. Of course it will be long before I shall have mastered it throughout —it is a kind of calculus brought to bear upon the art of verse. But I already have been able to study certain of its departments, with the greatest interest and with a necessary confession of their truth. For instance, I have been greatly interested in the pages devoted to the use of the *Rest*, as exemplified in Shakespeare, Mother Goose, and other English classics. Here are matters which often have occurred to me, also, though of course in a superficial and as-you-go way. *You* seize, classify, analyze, combine, and have made the first grammar of English verse. But grammarians do not make language, nor do men become writers by aid of grammars. Hence I should much prefer recognizing the truth of your novel and wonderful analysis, in my own works, after having written them by instinct, than to attempt, *a priori*, to sing in accordance with laws which govern the poet willy-nilly. God made the world first, and then "saw that it was good"—and saw the reasons why.—I have not yet found the portions of your work in which I should disagree with you, and very likely there are none. At present my concern and approval are with its purpose and theory. For, long ago, I myself began a chapter on the canons of Poetry in these words: "Poetry is not a Science, *but there is a* science of Poetry." And I have been taken to task for insisting, in the "Vic-

torian Poets," page 299, that the technical distinction between Poetry and Prose must be sharply observed. I wish you might glance at that passage, which has subjected me to criticism in the *Atlantic*, and elsewhere.

—However, I am too tired with the "bread-and-butter work," of which you speak, to write a word more—nor do I get any time for literary work, since my winter article on Poe. I write to thank, and to wonder at, you, and to hope that you will come to New York soon, and let me know you better.

To George W. Pierce.

April 12, 1892.

Let me premise by asserting that you and I are of the class that *make* grammar. Grammar, like Time, is for slaves.

However, never were closely wrought and compacted lectures, of equal length, written under such pressure and in so short a time, as these of mine. In revising them for the printer, I am surprised that they are not crammed, instead of being sprinkled, with infelicities.—Your letter came in, happily, on the very day in which I was preparing the current article for its appearance in a book next Fall. Let me tell you that I promptly modified every expression to which you referred with such pleasant cynicism. Still, not one of the phrases gives my meaning so precisely, in its revised form.

And now, finally—you will lose your character for perception, with me, unless you show some consciousness of the plainly-avowed fact that my essays are devoted to the *uttered* poetry of *language* —to "poetry in the concrete." It is purposely an effort to do something more than to repeat the vague and transcendental generalities of those who call a sunset "a poem." I can be as transcendental as any one, when I choose, but in this case I don't choose.

To Oliver Wendell Holmes.

December 28, 1883.

My dear Dr. Holmes,

Of course no Christmas present or greeting could give me so much honest delight as your letter—written at the selectest moment of all the year. It was a most unexpected honor, one worth waiting a decade to receive, and your words certainly give a hope-

ful and compensating ending to one of those untoward periods which, I suppose, come soon or late to every man's life-time. I heartily thank you for the impulse which led you to write me,—for really one has small cheer for his own kind in this slowly ripening cosmopolis where my missionary-work is cast,—and I heartily plume myself on having written even a few quatrains that suit the virile and healthy taste of our clearest-minded poet and thinker. You have lived long, have seen fashions come and go, and who so apt as you to distinguish between the caprice of the day and that which is founded in the lasting canons of all the kindred arts? Even at my age I begin to see what Browning meant when he said, "I have seen nine-and-thirty leaders of revolts." The tide always comes back to the water-mark,—so we need not follow it. But, alas, we lesser men have not your bright *esprit*,—which forces those, who do shift with the current, always to confess that your light outvies their own, though always shining "in its own place" and always "content."

As for simplicity, and natural English methods and measures, I have always contended that these things are the rarest to succeed in and the test of a true poet. I like what you have once and again said on the subject, and have rejoiced in your triumphs over the straight-backed old fashioned verse. A poetaster who writes quatrains, heroics, blank-verse, without fantastic diction and inversions, is like a weakling naked—his defects are plain to all the world. An imaginative poet, a poet with brain and feeling, is a poet in spite of his apparel. And, other *things being equal*, the poet who "mixes brains" with his measures steadily draws ahead and keeps ahead of the mere tunester and artificer. Right there, my dear and honored Master, is where your lasting fame and excellence come in. And you are right; the "fantastic tricks" of the Kensington-Stitch (as I call them) ballad-mongers are the cover of their weakness, and enough to "make the angels weep."

Imagine a true poet devoting a life-time to "ballades," and "villanelles" and "rondeaux," and the devil knows what! One may do such things, for diversion's sake, and to show that some things may be done as well as others,—but there an end.

I had you in my mind before your letter came: 1. Because I chance to be rereading all your work, just now; and 2. Because I have been, oddly enough, giving old Jonathan Edwards a thorough study, while making selections for an encyclopædic work. And

I call to mind some of your remarks upon that wonderful genius, who went through life with such a brain, and with so rare an imagination to boot, yet argued himself into a perfectly logical and unflinching joy of damnation. A born poet, a born scientific investigator,—what would he not have been in our age? Do you know that he anticipated Laplace—that he arrived at Berkeley's idealism through his own reasoning—that he hit upon the truth of *Evolution* (stopping, however, at the vegetable and animal kingdoms) —and all before his twentieth year! And then he bowed beneath Calvin's Yoke, and devoted a life-time to proving that the chief joy of the Saved will be the witnessing of the tortures of the Damned. So much for one's epoch and environment.

But I am returning you poor thanks for the greatest pleasure of my whole year. My family unite with me, dear Dr. Holmes, in praying that the time will be long before we must cease to think of you at this season, and to wish you in the good old phrase a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

With respect and affection I am
Very gratefully your friend,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

To John Lane.

The reason that money is lost, or, at least, not well invested, in publishing such books as these by ——— is because the poetry—however flawless and refined—is not *strenuously vital*. It does not greatly charm, nor passionately thrill. Again, it is not radically original—does not strike impressively *new notes*. Even the noblest poetry must be "interesting." Most of this interests only the "esoteric few," and they too have more universal poetry to enthrall them.

Now the diction and manner, and of course the dramatic thought and feeling, of—for example—Phillips are so above this average that they carry even experts, scholars, poets, the esoteric few, off their feet, and these make such an ado about it all that the entire public is aroused and in its turn ensures the triumph of the production.

Following the Lectures on Poetry, Columbia conferred upon Mr. Stedman the degree of L. H. D. In a letter to Professor F. D. Sherman, he says:

I set the higher worth upon Columbia's L. H. D. because I know that the personal feeling of you and other authors had so much to do with it. No tribute *could* be more grateful to me than this one, at just this time. The nature of the doctorate—that it means a specific something, rather than the general nothing of an LL. D. as usually conferred—is the main thing. I feel, and I guess my associates feel, that "poetry has riz."

And to Joseph W. Harper:

June 7, 1892.

My dear old Friend, of course I am touched and gratified by your most characteristic letter—no, not *most* characteristic, for the act behind it is even more so. Pray believe, also, that I am more gratified by your part in the honor conferred upon me than by the honor itself, and yet that, for several reasons, is not unwelcome. I never have sought for conventional honors—I have left those to my sturdier friends—like White and Reid and Phelps, whose careers I have watched with interest and without envy. My little ambitions have been in the line of an author and student's work, so far as they have been personal, and for the advancement of my craft in America, so far as they have been altruistic. I know, my dear Harper, that you recognize all this, easy-going as we are in our ordinary talk and good cheer.—Nor have I set much value on degrees from second-rate sources, and in this generation. But a doctorate from progressive Columbia, and in the city where I have toiled for thirty-five years—and where in the early days I was forced to *go into trade* or *give up my writing and study altogether* —is worth everything to me. There is, surely, a pathetic irony in that situation. An author resolved upon doing the best, or nothing, in literature as such, until lately was compelled to pursue at the same time some other means of *subsistence;* he thereby suffered a distinct loss of "professional dignity," and put himself out of the line of conventional rank; he thereby also helped to make authorship in the end so remunerative that younger men could avoid the loss of dignity. You can understand, I think, why such an experience should make the distinction I have received from your University, both as a lecturer and now as one of your *honorarii*, something to be grateful for.

And now as to your share in it. I am glad to receive it by your nomination, realizing your justly eminent position in the corpo-

ration, and always having regarded you as my nearest friend in association, years, and tastes, among the Trustees. Let me say that I have the critical faculty of putting myself "in the other man's place." I understood perfectly well that my paradoxical position, aforesaid, must have told against me, in 1887, even with a sincere friend. I suppose that only Drs. Barnard and Drisler knew my classical studies, or my position among scholars—as distinguished from whatever I had gained as a writer. The main object of this tedious letter is, after all, to do justice to Dr. Barnard —at once to absolve him in your mind. He did intimate to me that he should like to have me receive a degree from Columbia; but I never knew that he had suggested it to others until long after his death, and then from one who now is dead also. The knowledge was simply forced upon me, in spite of my refusal to hear the details, or to read any papers connected therewith. My only comment was that under the circumstances, at that time, I had not the slightest claim to anything from Columbia. So the only "bad form" was that, even in the closest social fellowship, I should have referred to that matter at all. Pray forget that I was so "weak of soul" at any time, forgive this long preachment, again accept my most unreserved thanks, and always think of me as

Very affectionately yours,

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

But fifteen years before this Stedman had written Mr. Harper as follows:

January 15, 1877.

Possibly you may find time to glance over a paper of mine, upon the Schliemann discoveries, which appeared in Saturday's *Tribune*, and to which some reference is made in an editorial this morning.

Why do I write this to you? Certainly not from an undue regard for my own work. Let me explain.

Every such article which I find the time and ability to prepare may be considered an honest and open bid for a future Professorship at Columbia College. It is the only kind of "electioneering" for which I have the inclination.

Yale and other Colleges excuse themselves for the didactic and obscure quality of their Professors of Literature, by saying that they have not the means to procure men who have the ability, reputation, and enthusiasm, required to excite the enthusiasm

of their students and to draw bright young aspirants to their halls. Columbia *has* the means. That is to say, she can and does pay her teachers a sum upon which they can live, and live *in this city* —where the right kind of a man wishes to live.

For one; if I should ever, *in the future*,—and I am in *no hurry*, —be deemed worthy of a call to a Chair in the Faculty of Columbia, I should willingly forego any larger income I might be making *here* and try to do honor to my "calling."

This is a memorandum. Nothing more. I have my own ideas of what a Professorship of this kind should be; and, being satisfactorily engaged at present, should never feel inclined to change my mode of life, or devote myself to new labors, unless the precise opening of which I speak appeared before me.

This note is written somewhat on impulse, and pray consider it confidential.

"Too late" came the offer of the Chair of Literature at Yale. From Mr. Stedman's diary of April 21, 1884, we quote:

I have been both pleased and distressed to-day. It seems that a party of the Yale Alumni agreed among themselves to double the endowment of the Chair of Literature at Yale, rendered vacant by Northrop's withdrawal, if I will take it and the Faculty will tender it to me. Mr. Holbrook has waited on me with his most lavish and desirable proposal—to which I am forced to say *No*, at my age, and with my debts of honor, my ill-health, and existing literary contracts. If it would not involve new and arduous methods of life and professional work, if my fortune had not suddenly taken wings—leaving me under obligations which I feel even more deeply than if they were legal debts—if I had not this encyclopædia *in mediis*—if my constitution were not shattered by work and trouble—what part could I desire so well. I am profoundly touched, affected, honored, by this action of the Alumni. If it had come *ten years ago*, I could have led a purely literary life. As it is, everything has come to me *ten years late*, in consequence of a premature marriage and early poverty. I find myself not only ten years *behind my own plans*—but just as far behind the time! Instead of lecturing at New Haven, I must work for subcommissions on the floor of the Stock Exchange!

In 1894 Yale again offered Stedman a Chair—the Billings Chair of Literature, even keeping it open for him several years. "I thought myself too old," he said, "to accept it, both for her sake and my own." After the *Yale Ode for Commencement Day*, 1895, she made him an LL. D., an honor which when offered by other institutions he had "steadfastly declined."

In 1906 Stedman wrote: "If I had accepted any one of the Chairs of Literature which have been offered me, I certainly never should have taught poetry or other creative literature in the technical and pedantic fashion introduced from Germany by our multitudinous Ph. D's."

Later memories of the Johns Hopkins Lectures are recalled by these letters:

To Alfred Jenkins Shriver.

February 20, 1900.

Physical disability, and that alone, keeps me away from your Commemoration Dinner this week. Next to my own University, Johns Hopkins holds the warmest place in my affections, since it was there that I received the greatest honor—inasmuch as it enabled me to render the highest service of my life thus far—that privilege meant more to me, I doubt not, than those six doctorates to President Gilman, which constitute a hexagonal crown upon which he lightly wears his laurels.

That your Commemoration this year is also Dr. Gilman's "Silver" Jubilee as President of Johns Hopkins gives me the best chance of sharing in his presence the pleasure of paying him meet honor, and I am indeed loath to forego it. Doubtless there will be few among your guests that have, like myself, come from his native town, his own generation, and his own Alma Mater.

I have a belief that the old-fashioned phrase, "a gentleman and a scholar," implies a natural correlation, and never more so than when the two nouns appertain to the Master of a University. That Daniel Coit Gilman was a gentleman by birth, breeding, and bearing, as his townsmen knew him in youth, has made him almost typical in their recollections. As a scholar he seemed to my young fancy just as typical, when I daily saw him coming and going to and from the Yale Library, half a century ago, and

I regarded him with far more respect and enthusiasm than his slight seniority of age and class would alone have gained from a somewhat irreverent observer.

Even then I felt that scholars, no less than gentlemen, are born —not wholly made, and I vaguely understood that he was an ingrained University man whose career was a "foregone conclusion." Yet, though won by his sweet and purely natural tact, I could not know of the third gift bestowed upon him at birth,—that of the organizer, whose creative and executive genius was to constitute him the ideal University chief.

Alexander well might be a founder of cities, if only to make amends for those he had destroyed. Dr. Gilman, as the builder of Universities, has added to the station of the one that nurtured him. If Yale is the "Mother of Universities," it is because she has only to plant a bit of herself—one of her own scions—in whatsoever soil, and ere long there is a sapling, and then a lusty young tree, and in time a deep-rooted and broad-crested elm, the symbol and rival of her own power.

Such an Institution as Johns Hopkins, set in your generous and favoring soil, is, in our human phrase, *enduring*. Her noblest leaders and servitors have the strength of the refrain,

"We may come, we shall go, but thou growest not old!"

Yet when her Golden Jubilee comes, her progeny, even though President Gilman—with that boy's smile of his—may not be with them,—they, and her sons that commemorate her anniversaries long after, will surely have a tenderer feeling for the master of her early years, for the inspired organizer that gave her strength until her thews and framework were indissoluble, than for any of his successors, long and unswerving as their line may be.

From Daniel C. Gilman.

FLORENCE, ITALY, May 13, 1900.

My earliest associations with Florence go back to a primeval period when your mother was here, and I had the pleasure of meeting her,—(perhaps, though I am not quite sure,—at the house of Hiram Powers),—and I heard from her lips the story of the Browning courtship, which she had just been told by the poetess herself, on a day they spent together in the country,—was it not in Vallambrosa? What place more appropriate for me to carry out a

purpose that I have held to, since the 22nd of last February,—and I thank you with all my heart for some most gracious words that I heard read to some of my colleagues and pupils, at their banquet, when they were commemorating twenty-five years of service in Baltimore. "It is not good to eat much honey"—and perhaps you gave me more than was wholesome,—but a little honey is very palatable, and I feel inclined to adopt the words that I heard spoken by Oliver Wendell Holmes as he recounted the number of his birthday tributes—"Do you know," he said, "that I rather liked it."

But beyond what you said in such kind terms of me, your allusions to Johns Hopkins University were most gratifying. We remember, as if it were just over, your brilliant course of lectures. You set the pace, for a succession of admirable men, each one of whom has taken the step from your introduction.

I have seen Willard Fiske repeatedly, and he has quoted Gilder as saying that you are happy in your release from Wall St. You will soon be, if you are not already, the Dean of our men of letters, certainly of the guild of Poets, and you are entitled to repose and dignity as well as to laurels and shekels.

I go hence to Rome, and then to Venice, and later to the whirl of the Exhibition in Paris. We never meet, but you are to me, always, a living example of enthusiasm and devotion to high ideals. May I send *our* kindest regards to Mrs. Stedman.

To Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Turnbull.

March 23, 1906.

My beloved Friends, with the snow almost a foot in depth around Casa Laura (which next month we leave for ever) I conjure up a picture in my mind of your beautiful home—of the plots of greensward in your avenue—of your music-room—of the group that gathered there every evening during my week with the most lovable hosts of my remembrance. If I could only be back, at my friend Dr. Van Dyke's age, and have it all over again! But what sings Sir Henry Taylor (see your "Victorian Anthology")

"The dog that's lame is much to blame,
He is not fit to live."

I know well that *you* will never say *that* of this old hound! And I realize, looking back over a baffled life, that the most satisfac-

tory month of its professional service, was, to *me*, the period when I had the high privilege of delivering the first course of Turnbull Lectures, of gaining the intimacy of their founders, and under their protection enjoying the refinement and high thinking of their circle at its best.

I am glad that I live to know of the inauguration of the second dozen of the Memorial Courses, and I feel "in my bones" that you can have had no more eloquent, poetic, and sympathetic lectures than Henry van Dyke is giving you. He is a man after your own hearts—in many ways particularly so. I wish I could hear some of his discourses; and if I were not old, and bereaved, and deep in the piteous task of rounding up my lifelong work, and putting away my *impedimenta*, I should possibly be at your reception to him, to-morrow evening. . . .

If one writes a series of lectures upon the subject of the Nature and Elements of Poetry, he must, perforce, go farther, and hazard a definition of poetry. Before Stedman and since, also, many have done this: "The breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all Science," says Wordsworth; "The name is applicable to every metrical composition from which we receive pleasure, without any laborious exercise of the understanding," is another statement; Yeats describes it as "An endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapours of the world an image of human perfection, and for its own sake and not for the art's sake;" and Leigh Hunt calls it "Imaginative passion: he who has thought, feeling, expression, imagination, action, character and continuity, all in the largest amount and highest degree, is the greatest poet." As to form, Dr. Murray defines poetry as "Composition in verse or metrical language, or in some equivalent patterned arrangement of language; usually also with choice of elevated words and figurative uses, and option of a syntactical order, differing more or less from those of ordinary speech or prose writing." With special reference to its function the definition of the same authority is, "The expression or embodiment of beautiful or elevated thought, imagination,

or feeling, in language adapted to stir the imagination and emotions, both immediately and through the harmonic suggestions latent in or implied by the words and connexions of words actually used, such language containing a rhythmical element and having usually a metrical form: though the term is sometimes extended to include expression in non-metrical language having similar harmonic and emotional qualities (*prose-poetry*)."

Lastly, Watts defines absolute poetry as "The concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language;" and Stedman's words are these: "Rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight, of the human soul." There is added clearness by the following excerpt: "If there is anything novel in this treatise,—anything like construction,—it is the result of an impulse to confront the scientific nature and methods of the thing discussed. Reflecting upon its historic and continuous potency in many phases of life, upon its office as a vehicle of spiritual expression, I have seen that it is only a specific manifestation of that all-pervading force, of which each one possesses a share at his control, and which communicates the feeling and thought of the human soul to its fellows. Thus I am moved to perceive that for its activity it depends, like all other arts, upon vibrations,—upon ethereal waves conveying impressions of vision and sound to mortal senses, and so to the immortal consciousness whereto those senses minister." "And no one," he adds later, "now feels the steadfast energy of science more than do the poets themselves; they realize that, if at first it caused a disenchantment, it now gives promise of an avatar."

A subtle and illuminating contribution to the *Oxford English Dictionary* by J. W. Mackail suggests a vital and important distinction:

> In general, the essence of poetry as an art is not so much that it is rhythmical (which all elevated language is), or that it is metrical (which not all poetry is, except by a considerable extension of

the meaning of the word), as that it is *patterned* language. This is its specific quality as a "fine art." The essence of "pattern" (in its technical use, as applied to the arts) as distinct from "composition" generally, is that it is composition which has what is technically called a "repeat"; and it is the "repeat" which technically differentiates poetry from non-poetry, both being (as arts) "composition." The "repeat" may be obvious, as in the case of rhymed lines of equal length, or it may be more implicit, to any degree of subtlety; but if it does not exist, there is technically no poetry. The artistic power of the pattern-designer is shown in the way he deals with the problem of "repeat"; and this is true of poetry likewise, and is probably the key (so far as one exists) to any technical definition or discussion of the art.

Stedman early makes it clear that he has no theory of poetry, and no particular school to uphold. "I favor a generous eclecticism, or universalism, in Art, enjoying what is good, and believing that, as in Nature, the question is not whether this or that kind be the more excellent, but whether a work is excellent of its kind."

I find that the qualities upon which I have laid most stress, and which at once have opened the way to commendation, are simplicity and freshness, in work of all kinds: and, as the basis of persistent growth, and of greatness in a masterpiece, simplicity and spontaneity, refined by art, exalted by imagination, and sustained by intellectual power. Simplicity does not imply poverty of thought,—there is a strong simplicity belonging to an intellectual age; a clearness of thought and diction, natural to true poets, —whose genius is apt to be in direct ratio with their possession of this faculty, and inversely as their tendency to cloudiness, confusion of imagery, obscurity, or "hardness" of style. It may almost be said that everything really great is marked by simplicity. The poet's office is to reveal plainly the most delicate phases of wisdom, passion, and beauty. Even in the world of the ideal we must have clear imagination and language: the more life-like the dream, the longer it will be remembered.

The traits, therefore, which I have deprecated earnestly are in the first place obscurity and hardness, and these either natural,—implying defective voice and insight, or affected,—implying con-

ceit and poor judgment; and secondly that excess of elaborate ornament, which places decoration above construction, until the sense of originality is lost—if, indeed, it ever has existed. Both obscurity and super-ornamentation are used insensibly to disguise the lack of imagination, just as a weak and florid singer hides with trills and flourishes his inability to strike a simple, pure note, or to change without a sliding scale.

No matter how we reconstruct the altars or pile cassia and frankincense upon them, there will be no mystic illumination unless a flame descends from above.

Readers of "The Nature and Elements of Poetry" remember well the part played in poetical creation by "genius," how fundamental the lecturer held it to be, and certainly that it is a gift not an acquirement. In *Harper's Magazine*, 1886, Mr. Howells had contended that there is no "genius"; "there is only the mastery that comes to natural aptitude from the hardest study of any art or science." There is no such "puissant and admirable prodigy . . . created out of the common." In the *New Princeton Review* for September, 1886, Mr. Stedman ransacks history, philosophy, and psychology in defense of his theory of genius as a gift. As this luminous essay will latter be republished no recapitulation of its convincing conclusions need be made. If not theoretically, then certainly practically, Mr. Howells's belief, put into actual working, would make an end of Stedman's conception of the Nature and Elements of Poetry. Among others, Edmund Gosse, in a letter dated November 19, 1886, wrote Stedman: "I had been waiting for a moment to write to you about your admirable paper on Genius. I am fully with you in your argument, urged as you would naturally urge it, with every grace and every courtesy, against a foe worthy of your steel. Why should criticism ever pass out of this delightful atmosphere?"

Even in 1892 Stedman had not forgot and sent this note:

Dear Editor's Study: I have been reading your "first-off" on Lounsbury, Chaucer, *et. al.*, and am proud that there is no "uncertain sound" to the new trumpet. Genius, that porphyrogen-

itus, is again confessed before men. When I paraphrase the Tyng watchword, and say—Stand up for Genius!—I mean no irreverence. For the man who hath the most genius hath the most of God immanent within him—the most inspiration, insight, intuition, through which things "flash into his brain." The highest exemplar on record was that Christ whose celestial human utterances changed the world. To stand up for genius, then, is to recognize the fact that all essential things are revealed through those most gifted with the "inward light"—all things of imagination, beauty, truth. I am glad you had so great a book as Lounsbury's for the text of your first Sermon. . . .

Once more the thought came up, as late as 1906, when Mr. Gilder delivered an address on *The Divine Fire*, which brought the following letter from Stedman:

Independence Day, 1906.

I have been reading minutely your Cornell Address on the Divine Fire,—and though, if you knew my ways just now, you would say that I was glad of an excuse for dodging my own work in this withering sultriness, I confess that the reading itself was my best reward. You are one of the few left, unashamed not only of keeping a high horse but of mounting him.—Well, I see you are an avowed Parsee, as I have been from the youth in which I found Emerson's avowal that everything is of "one stuff" confirmed by those discoveries of the "Correlation of Forces."

I note your new definition of the "genius" in which we both believe. But, as I deem *industry* merely one of its symptoms, I don't see why you should yield one whit to the "capacity-for-taking-infinite-pains" man! Genius is the automatic power and working of the creative Deity within us—the divinity of which we are each a temporarily (or perhaps externally?) segregated part. You expressed this yourself, superbly because without curbing your high horse to *reason* it out,—you expressed it spontaneously, as a poet,—when you wrote that noble passage which I quoted in my lecture ("Imagination") on the "Creative gift divine." (pp. 254–257). Genius is the unconscious—the unwilled, but inevitable, efflux of the power, the "divine fire," within its possessor. Of course it rejoices in activity—in "industry"—but industry is not genius.

To make your fine sentences on Imagination quite complete, from my point of belief, I should put it thus: "for genius, *of which the highest servitor* is the imagination triumphantly at work," etc.

But you will think me too great a stickler for exactness in expression—even if you agree with my radical conception of "genius," which very likely you do not. Your whole discourse is most elevating, and has led me to write a voluntary letter, though a score of clamorous epistles in vain have tried to call me to this desk. It is now more than a year since I have been able to touch my own work—have had the requisite bodily energy for it. Everything warns an old man that his particular earthly "segregation" must give way.

Thus, however far Stedman might incline to the Sect having for its motto, "Art for Art's Sake," he was still a world-remove from it: nay, although he ardently loved technic, and through it achieved a noteworthy success, he nevertheless held, heart and soul, that high idealism and spiritual purpose must be the final content and justification of technical perfection. "You may choose your own mystery, but a mystery you must have." Plainly Stedman had no sympathy with those who by the compulsion of their own endowments strive to atone for a pitiful dearth of spiritual reality by the vain striving after an eluding external beauty of form. They do not see that beauty is not morphological, but is almost exclusively physiological; it kindles to the divinest only in response to the divine. A thousand sentences both in verse and in prose might be cited to show that Stedman felt that poetry is dependent upon and responsive to the vivifying glance of indwelling creative spirit, that verse is the physiognomy of poetry—is only that—and the soul must speak through it, else verse is dumb.

Continuing illustrative excerpts from "The Nature and Elements of Poetry":

Most essays upon the theme have been produced by one or the other of two classes,—either by transcendentalists who invoke the astral presence but underrate its fair embodiment, or by technical artisans who pay regard to its material guise alone. There is no

good reason, I think, why both the essence and the incarnation of poetry may not be considered as directly as those of the less inclusive and more palpable fine arts.

Doubtless the prerogative of song is a certain abandonment to the ideal, but this, on the other hand, becomes foolishness unless the real, the truth of earth and nature, is kept somewhere in view. Still, if any artist may be expected to pursue by instinct a romantic method, it is the poet, the very essence of whose gift is a sane ideality.

The poet's technical modes, even the general structure of a masterwork, come by intuition, environment, reading, experience; and that too studious consideration of them may perchance retard him. I suspect that no instinctive poet bothers himself about such matters in advance; he doubtless casts his work in the form and measures that come with its thought to him, though he afterwards may pick up his dropped feet or syllables at pleasure. If he ponders on the Iambic Trimeter Catalectic, or any of its kin, his case is hopeless.

We do see that persons of cleverness and taste learn to write agreeable verses; but the one receipt for making a poet is in the safe-keeping of nature and the foreordaining stars.

Beauty, pure and simple, is the alma mater of the artist; her unswerving devotee is absolved—many sins are forgiven to him who has loved her much.

No work of art has real import, none endures, unless the maker has something to say—some thought which he must express imaginatively, whether to the eye in stone or on canvas, or to the ear in music or artistic speech; this thought, the imaginative conception moving him to utterance, being his creative idea—his art-ideal. This simple truth, persistently befogged by the rhetoric of those who do not "see clear and think straight," and who always underrate the strength and beauty of an elementary fact, is the last to be realized by commonplace mechanicians. They go through the process of making pictures or verses without the slightest mission—really with nothing to say or reveal. They mistake the desire to beget for the begetting power. Their mimes and puppets have everything but souls.

The whole range of poetry which is vital, from the Hebrew psalms and prophecies, in their original text and in our great English version, to the Georgian lyrics and romances and the Victorian idyls, confirms the statement of Mill that "the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm."

The difference betwixt poetical prose and the prose of a poet is exemplified by Mark Pattison's citation of the two at their best—the prose of Jeremy Taylor and that of Milton, the former "loaded with imagery on the outside," but the latter "colored by imagination from within."

Through poetry soul addresses soul without hindrance, by the direct medium of speech. Words are its atmosphere and very being: language, which raises man above the speechless intelligences; which, with resources of pitch, cadence, time, tone, and universal rhythm, is in a sense a more advanced and complex music than music itself—that idealized language which, as it ever has been the earliest form of emotional expression, appears almost a gift captured in man's infancy from some "imperial palace whence he came."

I have little patience with the critics who would disillusionize us. What is the use of poetry? Why not, in this workaday world, yield ourselves to its enjoyment? Homer makes us forget ourselves because he is so self-forgetful. He accepts unquestioningly things as they are. The world has now grown hoary with speculation, but at times, in art as in religious faith, except ye be as children ye cannot enter into the kingdom. We go back to the Iliad and the Odyssey, to the creative romance and poesy of all literatures, as strong men wearied seek again the woods and waters of their youth, for a time renewing the dream which, in sooth, is harder to summon than to dispel.

Eminence in the grand drama is the supreme eminence.

I think that the impersonal element in art may be termed masculine, and that there is something feminine in a controlling impulse to lay bare one's own heart and experience. This is as it should be: certainly a man's attributes are pride and strength,—strength to wrestle, upon occasion, without speech until the daybreak. The fire of the absolutely virile workman consumes its

own smoke. But the artistic temperament is, after all, androgynous. The woman's intuition, sensitiveness, nervous refinement join with the reserved power and creative vigor of the man to form the poet. As those or these predominate, we have the major strain, or the minor appeal for human sympathy and the proffer of it. A man must have a notable gift or a very exalted nature to make people grateful for his confessions.

The French Parnassiens, the English-writing Neo-Romanticists, are more constructive than spontaneous, and decorative most of all. They have so diffused the technic of finished verse that the making of it is no more noteworthy than a certain excellence in piano-playing. They plainly believe, with Schopenhauer, that "Everything has been sung. Everything has been cursed. There is nothing left for poetry but to be the glowing forge of words."

A good deal of our latter-day verse does not rise "like an exhalation." It is merely the similitude of the impersonal, and art for the artist's sake rather than for the sake of art.

Yet we have seen that a line can be rather clearly drawn between the pagan and Christian eras, and that there has been a loss. To think of this as a loss without some greater compensation is to believe that modern existence defies the law of evolution and is inferior as a whole to the old; that the soul of Christendom, because more perturbed and introspective, is less elevated than that of antiquity. Contrast the two, and what do we find? First, a willing self-effacement as against the distinction of individuality; secondly, the simple zest of art-creation, as against the luxury of human feeling—a sense that nourishes the flame of consolation and proffers sympathy even as it craves it:

"That from its own love Love's delight can tell,
And from its own grief guess the shrouded Sorrow;
From its own joyousness of Joy can sing;
That can predict so well
From its own dawn the lustre of to-morrow,
The whole flight from the flutter of the wing."

This sympathy, this divinely human love, is our legacy from the Teacher who read all joys and sorrows by reading his own heart, being of like passions with ourselves,—a process wisely

learned by those fortunate poets who need not fear to obey the maxim, "Look in thy heart and write!"

The Christian motive has intensified the self-expression of the modern singer. That he is subject to dangers from which the pagan was exempt, we cannot deny. His process may result in egotism, conceit, the disturbed vision of eyes too long strained inward, delirious extremes of feeling, decline of the creative gift. Probably the conventual, middle-age Church, with its retreats, penances, ecstasies, was the nursery of our self-absorption and mysticism, the alembic of the vapor which Heine saw infolding and chilling the Homeric gods when the pale Jew, crowned with thorns, entered and laid his cross upon their banquet-table. It is not the wings alone of Dürer's mystic "Melancolia" that declare her to be a Christian figure. She sits among the well-used emblems of all arts, the ruins of past achievements, the materials for effort yet to come. Toil is her inspiration, exploration her instinct: she broods, she suffers, she wonders, but must still explore and design. The new learning is her guide, but to what unknown lands? The clew is almost found, yet still escapes her. Of what use are beauty, love, worship, even justice, when above her are the magic square and numbers of destiny, and the passing-bell that sounds the end of all? Before, stretches an ocean that hems her in. What beyond, and after? There is a rainbow of promise in the sky, but even beneath that the baneful portent of a flaming star. Could Dürer's "Melancolia" speak, she might indeed utter the sweet and brave, yet pathetic, poetry of our own speculative day.

Goethe, in spite of his own theory, admitted that the real fault of the new poets is that "their subjectivity is not important, and that they cannot find matter in the objective." [1] The young poets of our own tongue are not in a very different category. The best critic, then, is the universalist, who sees the excellence of either phase of expression according as it is natural to one's race

[1] In the "Gespräche mit Goethe" Eckermann quotes: "Es ist immer ein Zeichen einer unproductiven Zeit, wenn die so ins Kleinliche des Technischen geht, und eben so ist es ein Zeichen eines unproductiven Individiums, wenn es sich mit der gleichen befasst . . . Wäre ich noch jung und verwegen genug, so würde ich absichtlich gegen alle solche Technische Grillen verstossen . . . aber ich würde auf die Hauptsache losgehen, und so gute Dinge zu sagen suchen, dass jeder gereizt werden sollte, es zu lesen und auswendig zu lernen." [*The Editors.*]

and the period. A laudable subjectivity dwells in naturalness,—the lyrical force of genuine emotions, including those animated by the Zeitgeist of one's own day. All other kinds degenerate into sentimentalism.

If we have lost the antique zest, the animal happiness, the *naïveté* of blessed children who know not the insufficiency of life, or that they shall love and lose and die, we gain a new potency of art in a sublime seriousness, the heroism that confronts destiny, the faculty of sympathetic consolation, and that "most musical, most melancholy" sadness which conveys a rarer beauty than the gladdest joy,—the sadness of great souls, the art-equivalent of the melancholy of the Preacher, of Lincoln, of Christ himself, who wept often but was rarely seen to smile. The Christian world has added the minor notes to the gamut of poesy. It discovers that if indeed "our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought," it is better to suffer than to lose the power of suffering.

My summary, then, is that the test of poetry is not by its degree of objectivity. Our inquiry concerns the poet's inspiration, his production of beauty in sound and sense, his imagination, passion, insight, thought, motive. Impersonal work may be never so correct, and yet tame and ineffective. Such are many of the formal dramas and pseudo-classical idyls with which modern literature teems. Go to, say their authors, let us choose subjects and make poems. The true bard is chosen by his theme. Lowell "waits" for "subjects that hunt me." Where the nature of the singer is noble, his inner life superior to that of other men, the more he gives us of it the more deeply we are moved. We suffer with him; he makes us sharers of his own joy. In any case the value of the poem lies in the credentials of the poet.

I take endurance to be the test of art. History will show, I think, that if a poem had not the element of beauty, this potency in art, its force could not endure. Beauty partakes of eternal youth and conveys its own immortality.

One impalpable attribute, light as thistle-down, potent as the breath of a spirit, a divine gift unattainable by will or study, and this is, in one word, Charm.

When to this the artist-touch is added, then the wandering, uncapturable movement of the pure lyric—more beautiful for its breaks and studied accidentals and most effective discords—is ravishing indeed: at last you have the poet's poetry that is supernal. Its pervading quintessence is like the sheen of flame upon a glaze in earth or metal. Form, color, sound, unite and in some mysterious way become lambent with delicate or impassioned meaning. Here beauty is more intense. Charm is the expression of its expression, the measureless under-vibration, the thrill within the thrill. We catch from its suggestion the very impulse of the lyrist; we are given the human tone, the light of the eye, the play of feature,—all, in fine, which shows the poet in the poem and makes it his and not another's.

If you compare our recent poetry, grade for grade, with the Elizabethan or the Georgian, I think you will quickly realize that the characteristics which alone can confer the distinction of which I speak are those which we will call Imagination and Passion. Poetry does not seem to me very great, very forceful, unless it is either imaginative or impassioned, or both; and in sooth, if it is the one, it is very apt to be the other.

What I may call the constant, the *habitual*, imagination of a true poet is shown by his instinct for words,—those keys which all may clatter, and which yield their music to so few. He finds the inevitable word or phrase, unfound before, and it becomes classical in a moment. The power of words, and the gift of their selection are uncomprehended by writers who have all trite and hackneyed phrases at the pen's end.

The creative imagination: a spirit that attends the poet unbidden, if at all, and compensates him for neglect and sorrow by giving him the freedom of a clime not recked of by the proud and mighty, and a spiritual wealth "beyond the dreams of avarice." Not all the armor and curios and drapery of a Sybaritic studio can make a painter; no æsthetic mummery, no mastery of graceful rhyme and measure, can of themselves furnish forth a poet. Go rather to Barbizon, and see what pathetic truth and beauty dwell within the humble rooms of Millet's cottage; go to Ayr, and find the muse's darling beneath a straw-thatched roof; think what feudal glories came to Chatterton in his garret, what thoughts of

fair marble shapes, of casements "innumerable of stains and splendid dyes," lighted up for Keats his borough lodgings. Doré was asked, at the flood-tide of his good fortune, why he did not buy or build a château. "Let my patrons do that," he said. "Why should I, who have no need of it? My château is here, behind my forehead." He who owns the wings of imagination shudders on no height; he is above fate and chance. Its power of vision makes him greater still, for he sees and illuminates every-day life and common things. Its creative gift is divine; and I can well believe the story told of the greatest and still living Victorian poet, that once, in his college days, he looked deep and earnestly into the subaqueous life of a stream near Cambridge, and was heard to say, "What an imagination God has!" Certainly without it was not anything made that was made, either by the Creator, or by those created in his likeness.

Some kind of faith, with its resulting purpose, has engendered all poetry that is noteworthy for beauty or power.

The best thing that I or any one else can say to you under these conditions is that a breath of true poetry is worth a breeze of comment; that one must in the end make his own acquaintance with its examples and form his judgment of them. Read the best; not the imitations of imitations.

For one, I believe that the best age of imaginative production is not past; that poetry is to retain, as of old, its literary import, and from time to time to prove itself a force in national life; that the Concord optimist and poet was sane in declaring that "the arts, as we know them, are but initial," that "sooner or later that which is now life shall be poetry, and every fair and manly trait shall add a richer strain to the song."

Let me refer to a single illustration of the creative faith of the poet. For centuries all that was great in the art and poetry of Christendom grew out of that faith. What seems to me its most poetic, as well as most enduring, written product, is not, as you might suppose, the masterpiece of a single mind,—the "Divina Commedia," for instance,—but the outcome of centuries, the expression of many human souls, even of various peoples and races. Upon its literary and constructive side, I regard the venerable Liturgy of the historic Christian Church as one of the few world-

poems, the poems universal. I care not which of its rituals you follow, the Oriental, the Alexandrian, the Latin, or the Anglican. The latter, that of an Episcopal Prayer-Book, is a version familiar to you of what seems to me the most wonderful symphonic idealization of human faith,—certainly the most inclusive, blending in harmonic succession all the cries and longings and laudations of the universal human heart invoking a paternal Creator.

I am not considering here this Liturgy as divine, though much of it is derived from what multitudes accept for revelation.[1] I have in mind its human quality; the mystic tide of human hope, imagination, prayer, sorrows, and passionate expression, upon which it bears the worshipper along, and wherewith it has sustained men's souls with conceptions of deity and immortality, throughout hundreds, yes, thousands, of undoubting years. The Orient and Occident have enriched it with their finest and strongest utterances, have worked it over and over, have stricken from it what was against the consistency of its import and beauty. It has been a growth, an exhalation, an apocalyptic cloud arisen "with the prayers of the saints" from climes of the Hebrew, the Greek, the Roman, the Goth, to spread in time over half the world. It is the voice of human brotherhood, the blended voice of rich and poor, old and young, the wise and the simple, the statesman and the clown; the brotherhood of an age which, knowing little, comprehending little, could have no refuge save trust in the oracles through which a just and merciful Protector, a pervading Spirit, a living Mediator and Consoler, had been revealed. This being its nature, and as the crowning masterpiece of faith, you find that in various and constructive beauty—as a work of poetic art—it is unparalleled. It is lyrical from first to last with perfect and melodious forms of human speech. Its chants and anthems, its songs of praise and hope and sorrow, have allied to themselves impressive music from the originative and immemorial past, and the enthralling strains of its inheritors. Its prayers are not only for all sorts and conditions of men, but for every stress of life which mankind must feel in common—in the household, or isolated, or in tribal and national effort, and in calamity and repentance and thanksgiving. Its wisdom is forever old and perpetually new; its calendar celebrates all seasons of the rolling year; its

[1] "The Church," said Cardinal Newman, "is the most sacred and august of poets." [Editorial Note.]

narrative is of the simplest, the most pathetic, the most rapturous, and most ennobling life the world has known. There is no malefactor so wretched, no just man so perfect, as not to find his hope, his consolation, his lesson, in this poem of poems. I have called it lyrical; it is dramatic in structure and effect: it is an epic of the age of faith; but in fact, as a piece of inclusive literature, it has no counterpart, and can have no successor. Time and again some organization for worship and instruction, building its foundations upon reason rather than on faith, has tried to form some ritual of which it felt the need. But such a poem of earth and heaven is not to be made deliberately. The sincere agnostic must be content with his not inglorious isolation; he must barter the rapture and beauty and hope of such a liturgy for *his* faith in something different, something compensatory, perchance a future and still more world-wide brotherhood of men.

CHAPTER XXIV

A VICTORIAN ANTHOLOGY

This volume of six hundred and seventy-six compact, double-columned pages, with selections from three hundred and forty-three poets, was published in 1895. Its purpose and field is explained by Mr. Stedman in his Introduction:

While this book is properly termed an Anthology, its scope is limited to the yield of one nation during a single reign. Its compiler's office is not that of one who ranges the whole field of English poetry, from the ballad period to our own time,—thus having eight centuries from which to choose his songs and idyls, each "round and perfect as a star." This has been variously essayed; once, at least, in such a manner as to render it unlikely that any new effort, for years to come, will better the result attained.

On the other hand, the present work relates to the poetry of the English people, and of the English tongue, that knight peerless among languages, at this stage of their manifold development. I am fortunate in being able to make use of such resources for the purpose of gathering, in a single yet inclusive volume, a Victorian garland fairly entitled to its name. The conditions not only permit but require me—while choosing nothing that does not further the general plan—to be somewhat less rigid and eclectic than if examining the full domain of English poesy. That plan is not to offer a collection of absolutely flawless poems, long since become classic and accepted as models; but in fact to make a truthful exhibit of the course of song during the last sixty years, as shown by the poets of Great Britain in the best of their shorter productions.

Otherwise, and as the title-page implies, this Anthology is designed to supplement my "Victorian Poets," by choice and typical examples of the work discussed in that review. These are given in unmutilated form, except that, with respect to a few extended narrative or dramatic pieces, I do not hesitate to make extracts which are somewhat complete in themselves; it being difficult

otherwise to represent certain names, and yet desirable that they shall be in some wise represented.

At first I thought to follow a strictly chronological method: that is, to give authors succession in the order of their birth-dates; but had not gone far before it was plain that such an arrangement conveyed no true idea of the poetic movement within the years involved. It was disastrously inconsistent with the course taken in the critical survey now familiar to readers of various editions since its original issue in 1875 and extension in 1887. In that work the leading poets, and the various groups and "schools," are examined for the most part in the order of their coming into vogue. Some of the earlier-born published late in life, or otherwise outlasted their juniors, and thus belong to the later rather than the opening divisions of the period. In the end, I conformed to the plan shown in the ensuing "Table of Contents." This, it will be perceived, is first set off into three divisions of the reign, and secondly into classes of poets,—which in each class, finally, are quoted in order of their seniority. For page-reference, then, the reader will not depend upon the "Contents," but turn to the Indexes of Authors, First Lines, and Titles, at the end of the Volume.

It is an arbitrary thing, at the best, to classify poets, like songbirds, into genera and species; nor is this attempted at all in my later division, which aims to present them chronologically. Time itself, however, is a pretty logical curator, and at least decides the associations wherewith we invest the names of singers long gone by. Those so individual as to fall into no obvious alliance are called "distinctive," in the first and middle divisions at large. Song and hymn makers, dramatists, meditative poets, etc., are easily differentiated, and the formation of other groups corresponds with that outlined in "Victorian Poets." Upon the method thus adopted, and with friendly allowance for the personal equation, it seems to me that a conspectus of the last sixty years can be satisfactorily obtained. The shorter pieces named in my critical essays, as having distinction, are usually given here. While representing the poetic leaders most fully, I have not overlooked choice estrays, and I have been regardful of the minor yet significant drifts by which the tendencies of any literary or artistic generation frequently are discerned. In trying to select the best and most characteristic pieces, one sometimes finds, by a paradox,

that an author when most characteristic is not always at his best. On the whole, and nearly always with respect to the elder poets whose work has undergone long sifting, poems well known and favored deserve their repute; and preference has not been given, merely for the sake of novelty, to inferior productions. Authors who were closely held to task in the critical volume are represented, in the Anthology, by their work least open to criticism. Finally, I believe that all those discussed in the former book, whether as objects of extended review or as minor contemporaries, are represented here, except a few that have failed to justify their promise or have produced little suited to such a collection. In addition, a showing is made of various poets hopefully come to light since the extension of my survey, in 1887. Others of equal merit, doubtless, are omitted, but with youth on their side they may well await the recognition of future editors.

A further evidence of Stedman's justice and universal sympathy is shown by his answer, in 1896, to the Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who had asked his choice of "ten noblest poems."

Your kindness, in pointing out a probable error in the Anthology, deserves a grateful acknowledgment. I shall hunt up the correct Liddell text. It is a wonder that—between copyists and printers —every page does not reek with mistakes.

As to the ten noblest poems—your qualifications of "form," "ethical insight," "spiritual inspiration" premise at once *your own theories of poetry*. One might pick out ten poems that might seem the "noblest" to *poets themselves*, and yet fall short of the second and third requirements.

I wrote you earlier that even a list of "Fifty Perfect Poems" did not count for much in the vast wealth of English lyrical masterpieces and that I was sure one could not select ten poems of the lyric or idyllic cast, which I could not match with ten or twenty others equally notable for one reason or another.

If you had said "ten poems which have made the most impression *as poems*," the task would be less hopeless. But to test my belief, with even this more specific condition, I have taken the trouble to make five lists of the most memorable, effective *poems* (excluding long masterpieces), but I can't say that any one of the lists seems to me distinctly superior to all the rest.

In all of them, however, I find that I have included, for one reason or another:

Milton—either "Lycidas" or the "Hymn on the Nativity."

Gray The "Elegy."

Coleridge "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" (in preference to the "Grecian Urn").

Wordsworth—either the "Intimations" or "Tintern Abbey."

Shelley "Ode to a Skylark."

Parson's "On a Bust of Dante."

But then! Think of Marvell's "Return of the Lord Protector," Dryden's "St. Cecilia's Day" and "Alexander's Feast," Milton's "Penseroso," Coleridge's "Genevieve," Burns' "Tam o' Shanter" and "Cotter's Saturday Night," Cowper's "On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture," Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyâm," Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and "Eve of St. Agnes," Shelley's "Sensitive Plant" and "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Tennyson's "The Lotus Eaters," "Ulysses," "Death of the Duke of Wellington," Landor's "The Hamadryad," Browning's "In a Gondola," "Saul," "Bishop Orders his Tomb," Swinburne's "Hertha," and "Hesperia," Collin's "The Passions," Bryant's "Thanatopsis," Tom Taylor's "Abraham Lincoln," "Whitman's "Out of the Cradle," Lowell's "Commemoration Ode," Emerson's "The Problem," and "Threnody," Poe's "The Raven," and so on, almost interminably. (In writing rapidly, you see I do not stop to give the correct titles, but simply indicate them unmistakably.)

Can you go into a garden and select the ten best flowers? There may be a hundred, each better than all the rest in certain respects.

Another test: "I think good songs and ballads a most vital and charming portion of lyrical literature, and I do not wish that a songster of your inborn native quality should be unrepresented in my 'Anthology.' But I cannot find *your* songs collected in book-form, and I am unwilling to trust the texts printed with the music." Thus Stedman wrote to Frederic E. Weatherly, whose "Indian Love Song" used to be sung to him whenever a willing singer chanced across his home's threshold. As with his other works, Sted-

man's conscientiousness is written on every page of his Anthology; his diaries, and his letter-books show the same bewildering mass of letters necessary to his fine honor in workmanlike detail. A glimpse into his study is afforded by some of these letters: the first to Ira D. Sankey, April, 1894:

As the nephew of one who thought so much of you—the late Wm. E. Dodge—I feel that I may address you without formality, and thank you heartily for your kindness. I return, by the hands of our common friend, Mr. George MacKay, the choice little volume which you confided to him and to me. It has aided me in verifying the text of "The Ninety and Nine"—a touching little bit of Hymnody, which I thought true poetry, when I first heard you sing it, years ago. The force and merit of a hymn are to be judged by its effect upon *the people*—no matter how correct its structure, if it does not appeal to their hearts and imagination, it is not a genuine hymn. So, when engaged upon a select Victorian Anthology, of all kinds of poetry, I concluded to put this lyric in it; and I am very much surprised that it has been slighted by Dr. Schaff and Mr. Gilman in their admirable "Library of Sunday Poetry."

Aside from its authentic text, I do not gain much from your book, for I need to know when and where Miss Clephane was born, and when and where she died—where and at what date the poem first appeared. I am glad to have learned from you its original title. Her brother strangely confesses that he is asked to make a brief sketch of his sister, and then—tells nothing at all about her, except that she was good, beloved, and charitable. There is a kind of irreligious lack of workman's conscience, not to speak of lack of commonsense, in such a "sketch." I have no patience with him. Still, my secretary has written to him for the ensuing data, and I hope he is still in the flesh at Melrose.

We all are rather proud of our unselfish and able young Evangelist, through whom this returns to you. He is still "seeking light," but after all his *life* is the best result of all his searches.

Three weeks later to Horace E. Scudder:

After reading "The Shepherd Girl," and readily yielding to its melody and indefinable charm, I found myself wondering which one of several meanings would best interpret the allegory of its

plaint. No one of my household can arrive at any positive answer to that speculation; but one unmarried lady, whose life is gliding on, thinks that the strayed lambs well may typify a maiden's flitting years. However, some lyrics, like some languages—the Hawaiian, for instance—are the more fetching when alien to your ear.

I scarcely hoped that H. M. & Co. would venture upon Miss ———'s book, and yet she is a sweet and true poet. But I am glad to read your reference to E. M. H., for I suppose it means that, if your folk will publish, she will consent to get her later poems together and add them to those in the Ticknor book.

Am making fair progress with my "Victorian Anthology," and it will be a good and long-needed compilation. Of course, I am obliged to prepare it *too rapidly*, and 'tis hard work getting many texts, permissions, etc., etc. I learned your view as to a good representation of the select minor minstrels, and approved of it. In fact, that will be a strong feature of this Anthology. Meantime, your hint that the book may be in demand for schools and families brings forcibly to my mind the *virginibus* maxim. This is often badly in the way of the best poetry, and it goes against the grain to omit what is often, the star lyric or ballad of a minor poet: e. g., "The Witches' Ballad" of W. Bell Scott—a superb thing, which even dear old Whittier could not bring himself to leave out of his "Three Centuries." So he elided the perilous stanzas, and spoiled the ballad. That I will not do, and so I lose it altogether. But, after all, such instances are rare in Victorian verse.

Between (real) poverty this year, and my Anthology and that Poe edition, I am to be a slave here for still another summer, and as yet we have been unable to rent Kelp Rock—and there is no health in us.

It was charming to find (good) poetry by both R. H. S. & E. D. B. S. in your May *Atlantic*. Moreover, under your quiet administration, the old magazine has picked up steadily. Finally, I have to thank you for the review of my book—which, I was pleased to see, is upon broad lines.

To Robert Bridges in the Summer of 1895:

I am heartily indebted to you for more than one courtesy,—and, in fact, you see how thoroughly I have relied upon my estimate of you—by my freedom in sending to you when somebody's carriage, like Becky Crawley's (no, I think 'twas Amelia Os-

borne's,) has "blocked the way." But you have captivated now a second one of my bright secretaries, which makes two out of three! —The Armytage-Tomson-Watson sequence is interesting. Well, a woman who can write such ballads[1] has a right to be her own mistress—to touch Life, one may say, at as many points as she cares for?

The Courthope item helps out a too-meagre note. My little biographies are now complete.

It was Stedman's habit to consult with genuine poets in regard to their selections. This he did out of respect for their judgment, and, since he felt their choice would be good, from his courteous desire to please. But if opinions differed, Stedman's conscience kept him independent. "I always have claimed," he says, "that a true poet or artist is a correct judge of the respective merits of his productions. A real 'maker' is usually a good critic. God made the world in six days, and then took a rest, *and saw that it was good.*" The answers which Stedman received prove how widely and surely his judgment was trusted.

To Eugene Lee-Hamilton.

May 20, 1894.

Your letter of the 25th of April, for some reason, has but just now arrived,—and doubtless your "Wingless Hours" will follow as soon as Hours so delightfully clipped can make the journey. But I am not willing to let even an ordinary and winged Hour take flight, before writing just a few lines to express my great comfort and delight in respect of your physical improvement. As you, with Bridges, De Tabley, and a few others, have chanced to be of the later poets who most nearly touch me, I have often thought upon you with something like affection—lamenting your reduction to something like pure spirit, while yet on this warm earth of ours. It lightens troubles of my own to-day to receive such assurances of your gain, from your own proper hand. Do "get better" still — *ite ad meliora.*

Now that I *am* writing, let me enclose the clipping of an "an-

[1] I have always thought her *ballads* her strong hold: The short lyrics she wrote from time to time for *Scribner's*, etc., might have been written by others—the ballads, *not.* E. C. S.

nouncement," which rather clearly tells its own story. This I do, asking the favor of representing you by careful selections in the Anthology forthcoming. The work undoubtedly will take its place in our libraries, reading-clubs, and the household, and will, I am sure from experience with my other books, awaken an American interest in many of the poets quoted. You will be in good company, and of course I only use enough matter to make the reader wish to acquaint himself with an author's books.

I suppose you mean my Turnbull Lectures on "The Nature of Poetry," when you speak of my book of essays? If so, you will see that your " Sea-Shell" was of use to me. That Sonnet was applauded whenever I read it to an audience. The Lectures have been repeated at several Universities.

From Eugene Lee-Hamilton.

June 2, 1894.

I am much touched by the kindness of your letter: it is charming to think that one can awaken so much sympathy in a distant critic who has never seen one in the flesh; but I trust that "a spirit in your feet" will some day bring you to Florence, and that then you will remember that I live there and come and see me.

I shall be proud and happy to be represented in the Anthology you are bringing out, and you are heartily welcome to take anything you like from my humble writings. I hope my " Sonnets of the Wingless Hours," which you had not yet received when you wrote, duly reached you. My publisher wrote to me to-day that an American firm has taken 100 copies of the little volume, which I was very glad of, as I have somehow an impression that I should get more sympathy in your Country than in my own, if only I were known there.

The improvement in my state, in which you show so kind an interest, continues without interrruption. I have during the last fortnight taken again to sleeping in an ordinary bed, and on my side, a thing I had not done for many a long year; and only those who have lain year in year out and night and day on a hard wheeled couch, know what that means.

To Robert Louis Stevenson.

July 14, 1894.

Your first book of verse, "A Child's Garden of Verses," came out in time for some appreciation, on my part, in the enlarged (1887)

edition of my "Victorian Poets," and now I am not willing that a secretary's formal letter shall go, and find you "under a palm-tree," without putting in a line of my own to say how much I count upon your graciously saying "yes" to its request. Not only because on my own island, off the New England coast, I re-read "Kidnapped" every Summer—nor only because my Anthology would seem to me deficient if you were not represented in it—but somewhat, in truth, for auld acquaintance' sake! Doubtless, though, you have forgotten the afternoon we two spent together, in the second-story smoke-and-coffee room of the Savile Club, years ago. You spoke to me, first, being a Scotsman and seeing that I was a stranger and a Yankee, and when you gave me your name, I thought of you chiefly as the author of the "Travels with a Donkey," etc.,—the book which then had just made quite a hit, and which I had been reading.

Now, I must confess that I did not then know you had written "A Night with Villon" and "The Sire de Malêtroit's Door," and I have ever since been at odds with myself to think that I was in that state of ignorance. For, months previously, I had chanced upon those wonderfully dramatic and poetic bits of mediævalism, in the columns of a New York journal which had copied them from a London magazine without naming the author. I was so delighted with them that I had cut them out and preserved them, feeling sure that their author would not long have his light under a bushel. Not until after my return to America (after our meeting) and the publication of (I think) your Suicide Club volume, did I learn that my companion at the Savile—the traveller of the Cêvennes—had written also those tales, and that I had missed the chance of a closer acquaintance with one of those whom I really cared to see and to know.

I have at least one trait in common with you, my knowledge of, and liking for, the tropics. Often I visit the West Indies, and when there find difficulty in harking back to the conventional and worrying life of my northern Philistine. I envy you.

From Robert Louis Stevenson.

August 11, 1894.

You can take your pick of my poêshies (*style*, Frêdêric ii) and a blessing upon your enterprise! I remember well the meeting to which you refer. I was not likely to forget it; you must remember

in those days I was but an amateur and you were already a big gun: the wonder is that you should remember it. My verse is a scanty plot; say, the fill of a snuff-box. By the by another thimbleful is under way; and I shall write and ask Sidney Colvin to let you have a sight of the proofs as soon as they are ready.

To Lord De Tabley.

July 14, 1894.

You may be sure that I am not going to permit my assistant to send you a *pro forma* letter, without putting in my word of remembrance, and continued appreciation, and warm congratulations upon the final public recognition which your beautiful work has obtained—not only among your countrymen, but from the true lovers of poetry in my own land. Yes, and above all, of personal thanks. I trust you have not thought me a churl, for well I know that your exquisite volume reached me last year and that you never have had a word of gratitude from me. The fact is that it came when I was undergoing some very distressing changes of fortune, in the midst of the financial storm which broke over America. For months my literary work had the go-by, and my correspondence accumulated so that I afterwards looked at it in despair. Then my health gave way, and not until last Spring did I manage to catch up the threads of life again. By that time I was deep in the early part of my "Victorian Anthology," and of my edition of Poe—both now well under way. And I have still deferred this letter, knowing that I would soon have to write you concerning the Anthology—and for leave to represent your poetry in it. Forgive all this detail; it signifies my respect for the poet whose work so long ago appealed to me, and whose latest lyrics are so much finer, even, than the early poetry. Your successive productions are unique in one respect: they reverse the process of other noteworthy writers, the work of whose early *prime* is usually their best. I know nothing else in this self christened Decadence so good as your ethereal lyrics. They are pure "poetry, or nothing"—poems for poets. This can be said of few other modern English lyrics, excepting some of Robert Bridges's and a few written by Lee-Hamilton and others. I well recall, my dear Lord De Tabley, our long ago correspondence. As I grow older in years, I sometimes look to see how time has treated certain of my early judgments—in your case I can honestly take satisfaction.

From Rudyard Kipling.

July 21, 1894.

Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 13th inst. I did not know that you had done me the honour of proposing me at the Century but I feel the more uplift in consequence.

As regards your "Victorian Anthology," of course all my verse is entirely at your disposal and, I would, equally of course, sooner trust your judgment, as to which should be taken than my own. Most times I feel as though I would give a year's pay to have everything rhymed that I have written rubbed off the slate and start in fresh. And again, isn't it early to anthologize the likes of me? But it shall be as you please.

We're coming home on the 5th of next month and I think my father is coming over again with us. England is a fine land when you can see it and have been born in it but I have a prejudice against fires in July or bitter east winds in June; and the sunny side of a piazza in Brattleboro is good enough for me.

Curiously enough, before your letter came, I was re-reading "Diversions of the Echo Club" (wasn't it Bayard Taylor?) in the little limp paper-back pirated copy that I can remember led me to the joyful labour of writing parodies on every poet between Wordsworth and Whitman. I used to know whole pages of it by heart.

From Alice Meynell.

July 29, 1894.

Mr. Francis Thompson asks me to reply on his behalf that he thanks you for your kind letter, and has much pleasure in accepting your proposal to include some of his poems in your collection.

The biographical facts in his case, I am sure you will understand, are rather difficult. He left his home owing to the well-meant pressure put upon him to become a medical student, and after a time he severed all relations with his people and suffered great privations. He was unfit for any calling except that of literature, but we cannot much blame his father for pressing him to do work necessary for his livelihood.

In the midst of his homeless life—after five years of it—he made a return to his old literary hopes of sending a manuscript essay to the little Catholic magazine *Merry England*, edited by my husband. The genius of the work was evident, and, after a long search, my husband discovered the author, with Æschylus

in one pocket, and Blake in the other, but possessed of little else.

After some little time Mr. Thompson began to write poetry in earnest. The publication of his work followed in due course. Mr. Francis Thompson is about thirty-five. He was exceedingly well educated at Usham, one of the principal Catholic colleges.

With regard to myself I need not say that I shall be very happy to be represented in your collection. My poems, however, are very few and very old.

I was born in London and educated entirely at home by my father, spending my childhood principally in Italy. In 1875 I published a small volume of poems which I called "Preludes." The poems were all very young work, the earliest being written at eighteen and the rest soon after. The volume was liked by some of its few readers, but it attracted little attention. I was disappointed, and wrote no more poetry at all, except soon after a sonnet and a lyric or two, nor have I written any since.

Several collectors of Anthologies however—especially Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. Sharp—both at Rossetti's suggestion found out some of my verses, and to them, originally, I owe the quite unexpected success of the re-issue of the poems in 1893. For this re-issue—which I should not have thought of—I must thank Messrs. Matthews and Lane, who took the initiative.

I married in 1877, my husband being devoted to literature. I worked steadily at journalism, but when Mr. Henley edited the *National Observer* I began the writing of prose essays, which I had long desired. I have been intent upon prose for the last five years. My volume of essays "The Rhythm of Life" appeared in 1893.

It was by my own wish that I did not contribute to the Anthology of living poets published by Mr. Kegan Paul. I was excluded by the editor in 1881, and invited to contribute to the recent edition, having written nothing in the interval. So I declined. I think you will allow me to add that I think the worst poems in my book are *Sœur Monique* and *A Poet to his Childhood*, and that I think *The Modern Poet* one of the best.

From Andrew Lang.

July 30, 1894.

Yale started "two up" as it was known they must win the weight and the hammer. ——— our long jumper, and a remarkable

athlete and first class man, had sprained his heel. Such is the fortune of war, but we won more easily than people expected here. Change of climate, etc., is, of course, always against visitors.

As to poetry, do your direst: I don't think my stuff has any right to a place as poetry (indeed my critics assure me of this) but it is certainly no worse than that of Tom, Dick and Harry, who think no small beer of themselves. If I have a favourite it is a little piece called "Romance" in "Rhymes à la Mode"; and I admire the *sentiments* of the lines on *Joan of Arc* and *Prince Charlie*. "Them's my sentiments" but I don't care for the vehicle much. The truth is that not one piece in a million of all minor poets, is worth looking at, "Kings' chaff is better than other folks' corn." I would not let the stuff keep me in town if I were you.

From Cosmo Monkhouse.

August 1, 1894.

I was pleased to find a few words written with your own pen inside your secretary's typewritten Circular. Typewriting always brings a chill with it. It draws a film of disconnecting medium between writer and receiver through which the warmest sentiments struggle almost in vain. It imparts an extra inhumanity even to figures and is capable of destroying half the cheerfulness of a cheque. So I was glad to get your few lines which made me seem to feel the grasp of the hand that wrote them and I hope that both you and your secretary will pardon me if I reply to both of your communications in one autograph letter addressed to yourself.

First, I like the idea of your book and am glad you are going to carry it out yourself. It will be a very bouquet of bouquets, a very flower of flowers, an anthology of anthologies, selected by an expert in poetical horticulture. It will include specimen blooms of all the finest modern varieties, not excluding, I hope, "The Stedman." It will collectively be one fair blossom, the aloelike crown, (one—but made of many bells), reared from the massive stock of "Victorian Poets."

Ah! how dangerous are metaphors! for I, who am to appear in the flower, had no part in the stem. Never mind—let me be a graft, an offshoot. I am content. Content also that you should have a free choice in selecting what is good, if any is good, in my work.

As to biography, you will find all that is necessary in Miles,

which I suppose you have, but if anything of mine in prose is mentioned I should like my "Life of Turner" in the Great Artist series and my "Life of Leigh Hunt" in the Great Writer series to be not overlooked. I have written a poem which I think you will like as much as anything else of mine.

Officially I have budded since ——— wrote his too kind note upon me. I am now, if you please, the Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade—for *Finance* mark you! Is not this an extra bond between us? I look to be appointed Poet-Accountant to the Queen. This is quite an old joke now. Forgive me if I have sent it to you before.

To Robert Bridges.

August 12, 1894.

It gives me pleasure to learn through a letter from Messrs. Bell & Sons, that you are not opposed to the inclusion of a reasonable selection from your poems in my "Victorian Anthology."

Pray forgive me for addressing you in this direct manner.

And now, with respect to the actual poems which I wish to insert—my first liberal acquaintance with your lyrics came when I found myself, ten years ago, the owner of Mr. Daniel's limited edition of your "Poems" (1884); I still have, and highly value, that book; it is brimful of poetry-for-poets. I also own your "Mars." To these I have recently added "The Shorter Poems," etc. (1895.) My selections are preferably, of course, lyrical, giving pieces in their entirety, and my list of those from which to choose is made up from the 1884 and 1890 volumes—for until now (on the receipt of your publisher's letter) I have not known of your fifth book of lyrics, in the new edition, nor that the latter is copyrighted in America, nor do I yet know who publishes it here—but I shall at once try to find it. Meanwhile my list to date is as follows:

1. Clear and gentle stream
2. Poor withered rose and dry
3. I will not let thee go
4. Who has not walked upon the shore (with that fine second stanza)
5. Whither, O splendid ship
6. I have loved flowers that fade [1]

[1] This lyric is quoted in full in my volume of Lectures on *The Nature of Poetry*, which I gave myself the pleasure of sending you in 1892–3, but do not know that you received it. [E. C. S.]

7. Thou didst delight my eyes
8. Awake, my heart, to be loved
9. O Youth when life is high (Paraphrase?)
10. The Windmill

It is my desire to use all of the foregoing numbers, or just as many as you will graciously place at my disposal. I am not a professional compiler, or "book-maker," and from poets later than Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, I have in very few instances *cared* to select as many lyrics.

I write to you personally, because I wish to learn whether you prefer to have your latest text followed? For example, there are differences, technical and verbal between the old and new text (in the 1884 and 1890 books) of—say—"Clear and gentle stream" and "I have loved flowers that fade." The punctuation changes. "Airy tomb" becomes "empty tomb," etc.

As Mr. Lowell's successor in the Presidency of the American Copyright League, and as an author, I naturally am careful of an author's wishes and prerogative, quite irrespectively of the legal conditions.

To Arthur J. Munby.

August 14, 1894.

Of course I don't permit any *pro forma* letter, from my assistant, to go to you, without seizing the chance to have my own say "in the premises": the more especially, in that I have long postponed writing you—since the pleasant advent of your

"peasant women, large and strong"

—of "Susan"—because I was booked to write you, very soon I *thought*, concerning this same "Victorian Anthology." Very well, I have had so very many letters to write to strangers, of whom I felt in doubt, that I have treated you as the cannibal treated his favorite missionary. You remember that he loved him so much that he ate *him* last of them all. A few of my close friends, you and Dobson and Lang, unlike as you may be, are quite alike in caring well for me; and to this group I am now writing my wish to represent them in my volume with somewhat affectionate care. As I naturally place good lyrics in it, when I find them, of course I wish to use "Doris," which never can be printed too often. Then I wish to quote (liberally) episodes from my favorite "Dorothy,"

and the closing pages of "Susan." Your latest servant-lass (I am as fond of her caste as you are, when at their best; and I must own that I have more than once been in love with one of them) is indeed such "a queen of womanhood" that I wish you had barred her from one "chore" (as we New Englanders call it), viz., that of handling the coals—yes, and of blackleading the grates—O, yes again! that of blacking the boots. A Yankee will not have a *woman* blacken his boots; not one he loves and embraces at all events. But Susan is personally noble and delightful, as you draw her, and with Arundel she can sit along and afford to snub the fine ladies. I wish, my dear Munby, you could live here for a time and know our American shop-girls and type-writers. They are a spirited, self-respecting, piquant set of girls and women, and how your charming and wholesome verse would celebrate them! Well, I am grateful for your gift and your remembrance, and for your apt readings from my own dull prose. My Anthology is having the same critical pains which I would give an original treatise. Besides this work, I am editing with Professor Woodberry, a 10 volume edition of Poe—revising, even *punctuating*, his million words of text—and writing three essays for it,—all this with the "hard times," has left me small chance for ordinary enjoyment of correspondence with my friends, but I never have them, the few whom I count as such—long out of mind.

To Frederic W. H. Myers.

August 16, 1894.

I am heartily obliged for your note, with the permission to represent you in my Anthology—where you certainly by double claim belong, for I see that I had the good taste to praise your poetry in "Victorian Poets" as long ago as 1875, and again in the supplement to the enlarged edition of 1887. Before receiving your note I had already prepared my specimens from your verse, as follows:

(1) A selection from "Saint Paul" ("Lo, as some bard on isles of the Ægean"); (2) *Song* "The pouring music, soft and strong"; (3) "On a grave at Grindelwald"; (4) "A last appeal"; (5) A long passage from "The Implicit promise of Immortality," beginning "And is this then delusion?", and ending, "origin for the further hope"; (6) "I saw, I saw the lovely child." I think I omitted the *Newport Letter* because it is in *Miles*, and because I was so

interested in *No. 5*. If you speedily say so, I will substitute the *Newport* poem for No. 5, as it *is* of course adapted to a Yankee public. Am crowded by the long range of my compilation. For a year I have been vexed with myself, in that when I passed an evening with you at the Century Club, I did not realize that the Englishman with whom I was discussing "subliminal consciousness" was also the author of "Saint Paul"!

From Ernest Rhys.

August 18, 1894.

Your kind letter came on the unkindest day of this year,—the one touch of reassurance! So you may know how much it meant for me to get it. With something of a dog's loyalty, I cling to old friends; and with a cat's adhesiveness, to places; and memory carries me lightly across to you in New York many a time when London would seem to be all my tale. It is delightful then to find you all remembering me, and doubly so to find you like my book, the other part of me.

"Poor rhymes, did you go forth
Across the Atlantic main:
And are returned again!
Diana knows your worth:
Ye were not spun in vain,—
Poor rhymes."

In that fashion I once wrote, but it is clear I must revise the lines in the light of your letter.

But to business:—of course you may have anything you like from my book; and what you like will be its best. Since you ask me to choose, however, let me name "A Winter Night's Bacchante," "A Mountain Cottage," and "An Autobiography," as favorites of my own, which have also been praised by the critics. Professor Palgrave, Arthur Symons (who is reviewing me in the *Athenæum*, Le Gallienne, and others have specially selected "The Mountain Cottage." Diana tells me to boast of my ballad in "The Rhymer's Book":—"Howell the Tall," which is certainly very Celtic, and which might serve therefore to represent that side of things, otherwise, I imagine, not much in evidence in your volume. These suggestions are all just as tentative as you please: you have

no contributor so much at one with you and whatever you do, as I am.

"LL. D." you say, and "a little older and grayer!" Well, my dear doctor, no one ever deserved the Academic Laurel more! May it long flourish green on your brows! And my dear American mother,—how pleased she must be with the symbol!

I am ashamed to end in an egoistic note; but I must just say a word about the new series of the English Lyric Poets, that I am preparing for Dent. This, and a book upon Sir Frederic Leighton, which Gleeson White asked me to do, are occupying most of my time; but "there's pippins and cheese to come!"

From Arthur J. Munby.

August 27, 1894.

I am the more pleased to hear from you, because I had begun to fear that my clever contrivance of hoisting "Susan" with *your* petard was a failure; and that she was too unusual and un-American, to commend herself, I will not say to your affections, but to your esteem or regard. It is therefore very consoling to see what you kindly say of her; and with regard to her "chores"—a word not unknown on our side—of boot cleaning, grate blacking, and the like, I have to plead that these and the like of them, were the work she was bred to and earned her living by: and that, knowing how lowly they were, she liked them all the better for that very reason; because they formed our easy and natural expression of her own determined lowliness. As for her husband, he honoured the lowliest honest work; and seeing her motive in choosing such modes of expressing her love for him, he loved the mode for the sake of her motive. Are not these reasons good, on his side and on hers?

It will give me great pleasure to see any portion of "Susan" and of "Dorothy" honoured with a place in your "Victorian Anthology"; and I need hardly add that "Doris" (I am so glad that you like *her* so much) and any other lyrics of mine, are very much at your service for this same purpose. You have, I think, the volume in which "Doris" appears; and I may mention that three things in that volume have lately been extracted for a little book of "Nature Poems," in the series of "Canterbury Poets," edited by Mr. William Sharp. The three are, "Vestigia Retrorsum" (now called "At Cambridge"), and "At Perivale," and—but I cannot recollect the third. I believe too that you have my book called "Vestigia

Retrorsum," which was issued in 1891 by Remington and Co. . . . It contains some things which it might suit you to select from.

Per contra, I think I did *not* send you my "Vulgar Verses," also issued in 1891; so I have now asked Messrs. Reeves and Turner to send you a copy. Pray accept it from me as another small proof of the fact that I *do* care much, both for you and for the great work you have done and are doing for the nations. I fancy that I may have kept back "Vulgar Verses," because many of the pieces are written in dialect (Lancashire and Shropshire) and relate to persons and things of the humblest and roughest kinds. Mr. Buxton Forman, however, has lately written me in an encouraging manner about the book; speaking especially of a poem in it called "Queen Kara," the object of which is to show how a girl, being pure, can rise by mere force of womanhood from her lowest state of barbarism and degradation. There are three pieces in the volume, which I confess are favorites of my own: "Mistress Mary," "Coster Emily," and one about a "Little River." No—I think this last is in "Vestigia Retrorsum."

Thus have I selfishly written a whole page about myself! But I must ask you to take some part of the blame to your*self*; having regard to the request so courteously conveyed in Miss Coleman's letter; to which letter I will beg her to consider *this* letter as a reply. If you kindly give things of mine a place in so important an Anthology, I am naturally desirous that you should have the whole of my little field to choose from.

And now, as to your own current work which you give me such good news of: ten volumes of Poe, *plus* the Anthology, really seems a gigantic undertaking. I hope it does not nor will not interfere with orginal productions of your own; at any rate, you tell me of three essays on Poe, which I hope to read when they come over here. Apropos of the Anthology, do you know Sir Samuel Ferguson (Sam Ferguson he was affectionately called) the Irish Poet? His "Forging of the Anchor" is a fine poem; and my friend Whitley Stokes, who is a very distinguished Irishman, asked me to call your attention to Ferguson's work. Then again, do you know a little book "Reverberations," anonymously issued about 1850, and written by the Reverend Wathen Marks Wilks Call? It contains some very striking verses on Balder, Thor, and other Norse subjects. As for my old friend W. J. Linton, he belongs as much to your side as to ours, so he has a double claim upon you. His

latest published volume appeared in 1889, with a portrait—a very good likeness.

I would gladly make the acquaintance of your American shop-girls and type-writers; but surely, like their English congeners, they must "fall between two stools"? To me, there are only two types of woman that are worth celebrating, at least in verse; the true and high bred *lady*, and the true and homely *peasant* or *servant*. To all others, I apply those words in Revelations—"I would thou wert either cold or hot: and, for because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Very ungallant! you will say: but an *imitative* class, a *second hand* refinement, have no charms for me. Still, I am open to conviction, on this as I hope also on other subjects.

Dobson paid me a pleasant visit not long ago, at Buttercup Farm, my little cottage in Surrey. We talked of you, of course, and of his own work, which is much and multifarious, and now rather in prose than in verse. The Laureateship, you see, is still vacant. Many poetic folk think that Robert Bridges should have it. He has great merits; and he is not one of those who for various reasons should *not* have it. I shall of course, inquire for the "Victorian Anthology" here as soon as it is out, and shall see your selections with great interest. Meanwhile, let me assure you that the words of respect and affection with which you close your kind letter are at least equally applicable to my feelings toward you.

To Eugene Field.

December 12, 1894.

My beloved Eugenio: Hold this paper to the light, and you shall see that it was made for me at the imperial mills in Tokio, and at the behest of my vivacious (and now very [1] "top-lofty") friend, Heromich Shugio. I pray you to comprehend, moreover, that I use it only for my poems, and for a letter now and then to some person of whom I particularly approve for the moment. I am pleased—or rather, "we are pleased," as the Empress Catharine said to the Grenadier—that you sent me your "Love-Songs of Childhood," for it touches me in a tender spot, and tenderly withal, and I like it as well as anything you have done. No man who could sing these pure and quaint and genuine songs, winsome to both

[1] In view of the plight of the Chinese Dragon. My! what a big head every Japanese has got. [E. C. S.]

young and old, could be *wholly* bad. I have fallen so in love with your Dinkey-Bird singing in the Amfalula tree, that I to-night have christened the Lear—Rands—Dodgson carols, in my "Victorian Anthology," "The Land of Wonder-Wander" (quoted). I was at my wit's end for a title, when I heard your Dinkey-Bird!—

As for inkstands, I have but the one I am using. Bide a while. How I used to envy Bayard Taylor, with his Thackeray inkstand (silver—a gift from Anne Thackeray)! *Why* don't Stone and Kimball get out the early volumes of our Poe? The Christmas sale is killed. I am aging, worn-out, poor, but proud as Lucifer.

To C. G. D. Roberts.

February 3, 1895.

Once in a great while, I do write a voluntary letter, and this is one of them—think of it! A letter actually about my own work and affairs! It occurs to me that I would enjoy, now and then, writing a brother poet like you, a *long* letter about the things we both love—writing for the pleasure of it, as I used to write in younger and happier days. . . .

You have heard of the *Anthology* noticed last summer, "as per" the slip enclosed? Well, after infinite labors it nears completion. I have concluded to add a few specimens of the work of the leading Australian and Canadian Poets. Of course the space is limited. Again, the quality of excerpts must be high. So I wish to select, absolutely, the *real*, the foremost poets of the Dominion —not necessarily to include those "of promise," but those from whom I can take poems (not too long) of interest and value to any English reader.

Have you time to write me (of course in confidence) the names of the Canadian poets your own judgment would select,—possibly, also, naming some of their respective lyrics and ballads which you think most striking. I would, by the way, include any noteworthy poem by a "single-poem poet"—for the *poem's sake*.

I have on my shelves the leading Canadian Anthologies, I believe, and many of the books of various poets, and could readily make up a respectable showing. But my work on the ten volume Poe, etc., has so absorbed me, of late, that I am scarcely up to date, and you are one of the two men from whom I deem it wise to get aid, and whose opinion I know, would be based in tastes similar to my own.

Tell me, also, the poems from among which you would be willing to have me make selections representing your own work. Name as many as you choose, and I then can take my choice of them. One secret of the value of Dana's "Household Book" is that each poem in it has a distinctive character or interest. . . .

To Katherine E. Conway.

Washington's Birthday, 1895.
(And he bore no likeness to our own plutocratic statesman!)

And now I have a little iron of my own in the fire; and one *does* have to write letters on his own account—and then he always enjoys it. Besides, I am writing to *you !*

I had a lovely note from you about Christmastide—yes, and the impassioned stanzas "Outgrown," so full of feeling and real lyrical quality—so carefully finished, besides, and one rarely finds those things together. When you get it into your next book, will you think it necessary to retain the quoted prelude? For the poem stands well by itself, tells its own story, fine as the prelude may be. Meanwhile, I have the copy in my package of possible selections —if I ever make a companion (American) volume to my "Victorian Anthology" now in the press.

I write to-night for aid on one or two points, *in re* the last named book. Can you tell me anything of Dora Sigerson, author of the enclosed conjuring little ballad? Who she is—how old—author of any book, etc.?

Next, Fanny Parnell. I am going to use her "After Death"—called "Post Mortem" in Salt's "Songs of Freedom." The latter book gives her dates *1848*–1882. "Irish Minstrelsy" (also of "Canterbury Poets") gives *1854*–1882. Which *title* is right, and which *date* is right? If you don't know, to whom can I apply for the data? Her mother—did she not die horribly? I suppose Miss Sigerson may be a daughter of Dr. Geo. Sigerson—a Dublin poet?

I can't get anything GOOD by Alfred Perceval Graves, except a charming little bit from Kate Tynan's "Irish Love-Songs"—"The White Blossom's Off the Bog." Is there any *book* of his *own* poetry?

Have imported many recent books, but have failed to get Rosa Mulholland's Poems. Can you suggest anything good of her's? You will think I ought to wear a sprig of shamrock? Well, one

wants to after reading Jane Barlow's "Bogland Studies." Besides, I loved an Irish girl once—long since at rest under the sod—and for her sake I know you will bear with all this questioning.

Lord De Tabley wrote: "I am much interested to hear of the progress of your new Anthology. I think your selection of pieces from my book is well taken, and thank you for inserting so many. Your 'Victorian Poets' was the first book which ever mentioned any work of mine."

From Arthur C. Benson.

April 20, 1895.

Your very kind letter has just reached me here, in the most secluded valley of the English Lakes, where I am enjoying an Easter solitude. I am of course only too glad to let any of my work appear in your Anthology; it is an encouragement to me to try and do better; and I am none the less grateful for your gracious criticism which I value because it comes from a mind of acute insight and outspoken sincerity.

I will send you, if you will permit me, a volume of my earlier poems, as well as an earlier privately printed volume, when I return home.

I do not like to let this go without one word of admiration for your own thoughtful and delicate work which I have often admired.

From George William Russell.

April 20, 1895.

Mr. Mosher of Portland has asked me to reply direct to an enquiry about my full name which I append. He has also sent me a little printed extract from a letter of yours. I am glad to think there is an impulse towards transcendental thought of late years in Ireland, and this I think is general and shows that the hour of our Island has again come. Since the legends of the old heroic cycles of the Gods and Druids there have been centuries of silent, mystical, imaginative brooding and now we waken up again and almost all that is said bears the burden of dreams long-continued. Do you know the work of Mr. W. B. Yeats? I think, and I do not feel much influenced in this by my personal friendship, that in his book "The Wanderings of Oisin" there has been heard for the first time for half a century the cry of a royal imagination. Nature

to me is a veil tremulous with light, and I only sense but dimly behind those rich colors and heroic forms which are the common perceptions of his soul. Another book published last year, though much slighter, still shows the way our national literature is tending. I mean "Two Essays on the Remnant" by Jno. Eglington. One would think Thoreau had taken birth again. As it may not be easy to procure in America I send you a copy of this pamphlet which has attracted much attention here. The author is almost a boy. I have hopes that a literature spiritual, imaginative and free from conventional aims may arise here. I feel sick when I read most of the current English work. Imagination is dead, lust veiled by æsthetic forms seems the only motive. A dead and uniform prettiness prevails everywhere. The power has gone out of them and one longs for the more natural energies of life, a Whitmanian ecstasy, to flow through and invigorate them. I always feel refreshed when I think of American literature. The Whitmans, Emersons and Thoreaus. Well, I guess my personal feelings don't interest you, so I will reserve them for some less busy people whom I can conveniently buttonhole.

Upon the completion of "A Victorian Anthology," one of the earliest letters which was received came from Professor Woodberry:

My dear "Wicked Partner,"—It's a charming phrase of wickedness you illustrate, you "give" me everything (except "away") as a wicked partner should. I did not expect this gift, and you have so many to remember, I know—and then you have taken real pains with it and copied out that happy and high-sounding sonnet—a true Muse's "Vale, Vale, Vale!" over the dead age. 'Tis dead,—and whether I am glad or sorry I don't know—magnificently dead—and you bear up the triumphal pall, rich and various as any Roman march to the Capitol,—truly 'tis magnificent, and there's so much of it! The greatest age yet.

But we and ours come next—greater age and greater nation, if we ever get through with this long "aborning,"—so I believe. This is the "partnership" I shall value, if I might be thought of as one of the later pioneers sometime; but pshaw! the sun will rise without any leverage when the planet gets into position.

I am infinitely obliged to you and remain yours ever partner or no partner. . . .

By the way, thanking you for gifts, may I ask another? I wish you would give me a *simple plain* pipe some day. I have asked nearly all my friends, and so far six pipes have come in.

Yesterday Dr. Garnett wrote to ask me about your "Anthology," and so I sent him a copy. He's as good an American as I am an Englishman—that's doing well for both of us.

From T. B. Aldrich.

October 27, 1895.

I cannot help telling you, even at the risk of breaking your back with one more epistolary straw, that it is the most perfectly edited compendium of poetry I ever saw. The arrangement of the poems is novel and admirable, and the selection seems to me faultless. Wherever you have taken but one poem from a poet, you have taken his very finest. The case of Oscar Wilde, for example. Whether or not the poor devil ever stands there again, he stood on the heights when he wrote *Ave Imperatrix*. Your single-poem selections throughout have gone far to make me proud of my own taste, since yours endorses it. I think so highly of your literary judgment that it is a grief to me on those rare occasions when I do not agree with you.

From the Same.

October 29, 1895.

Five or six hours after I had mailed a line to you yesterday morning, the Park Street folk sent me your loving note, which I have carefully inserted in the Anthology, making that special copy precious to me and to all future owners. I noted your kind mention of the Landor matter, but I had forgotten that I supplied any titles. I am glad to be associated with this book. What a volume of rich and varied poetry! In order to make so fine a collection from the Elizabethan fellows, one would have to take large slices of Shakespeare. I do not think that any Englishman, and certainly no other American, could have done the work as you have done it. I thought myself rather well grounded on the subject, and that no English minor poet of importance had escaped me; but I have been going to school to your Index of Poets.

From William Winter.

November 6, 1895.

I am very glad to have a copy of your "Victorian Anthology." It is another monument to your learning, judgment, and taste. You certainly have done great service to the Victorian Age and to its bards. I had no idea there were so many singers—but the woods of England are full of birds and the birds sing more sweetly there than anywhere else.

From Horace E. Scudder.

November 29, 1895.

I can't help it if all the world has been praising your book, I must, as a fellow-craftsman, tell you how thoroughly I admire the workmanship. You have raised editing to a fine art, and it really seems as if you had made the task as difficult as you could for the sheer pleasure of triumphing over the difficulties. I think your Anthology will remain the despair of true anthologists, and a rebuke to the easy going scissors-wielders, who fancy that it is a simple matter to select from a mass of poetry. You have helped Time, the great winnower, with your own fan, and the bearded old gentleman can lay aside his implement and drink molasses and water; you have done his work for him.

To Horace E. Scudder.

December 14, 1895.

You exercised amazing magnanimity in giving me those fascinating words of cheer, anent the *Anthology*, in view of the fact that you had remembered my birthday (in 1894!) and had then sent me your "Childhood in Literature," and that both of those kindly tokens of our regard for each other had lain on my table, unacknowledged, ever since. If you ever get caught, for *22 months*, between two cylinder presses, in such wise that *all* your books and letters from *intimes* have to await your release, you will realize that a year seems no more than a week. Three-fourths of my letters another can write for me—the residual fourth, since 1893, has not been written at all. I can't tell you how *grateful* I am to you for still keeping me on your books. Your good-nature enables me to hope that a few other dear friends, whom I have treated still more unpardonably, will leave the door open for their *Ami Prodigue*.

While there has been much newspaper approval of my compila-

tion, your letter, so generous and (to my mind) authoritative, arrived in the nick of time to offset my depression—in view of a "pernicketty" column in the *Nation-Post*. You remember advising me to pay some attention to the recent and youngster poets? This I did, and I think it greatly increased the interest of the book. Various critics, however, pooh-pooh at the space given to contemporary small-fry. But the *Post* surprised me by thinking that I have not carried your idea far enough, and by naming many almost unknown versifiers. Henley, by the way, was the only modern who put on airs, and refused to be included. To-day there is an innocent donkey in the *Critic*, who plainly knows nothing of bookmaking—pitching into the *Riverside Press*. Gilder simply wrote me that his correspondent objected to the elided "e" in "ed," and I replied and explained without having seen the correspondent's letter. What a blunder on my part! I now shall have to write again—since his whole notion is that *I* have nothing to do with texts and proof reading!—In fact, there is more nonsense and bother over one compilation than over a dozen freshly-written books. All this, I suppose, you long since learned by your own experience.

To the Editors of the *Critic*.

December 2, 1895.

I think that your correspondent, if familiar with the editions authorized by Tennyson, Browning, etc., of their own works, will allow for the preference entertained by many in favor of texts conformed to the author's own usage and the fashion of their time. Tennyson, for instance, uniformly elided the *e* in the verbal endings named. The Riverside Press agreed with me that we would have no "hard and fast" rule, but would aim to be in keeping with the styles of the respective periods. The era covered is a long one. The texts of the very recent poets are less classically "established," and during the last twenty-five years it has been the custom to avoid the elision and apostrophe. Therefore, for the modern period, embraced in the third division of this Anthology, the latter-day usage is consistently adopted.

As many questions have been addressed to me personally, kindly permit me, now that my hand is in, to answer a few of them. Mr. W. E. Henley is omitted from "A Victorian Anthology" by his own polite request, accompanied with the statement that

for sometime past he has "made it a rule to decline representation in anthologies of contemporary verse." Wordsworth is represented only by certain prefatory stanzas, for reasons fully given in my Introduction. Montgomery's secular poetry was wholly of the Georgian period, but I wished to include him simply as the pioneer of the "Early Hymnody." As I say, the book covers the greater part of this century. A veteran correspondent asks why the third division is so long and contains so many "fledglings." Another, presumably of the new generation, thinks too much space is given to the earliest period, and that more young aspirants should be included. But in fact, everything is subordinated to the general logic and design. Still, I am more surprised by the latter writer than by the former; for the best Anthology studies the verdict of time and the public. It is not sure to my mind that the newest poets are as imaginative as their predecessors, or that they even belong to the Victorian period. To increase the value of my compilation, I have selected representatives of every modern tendency, and if equally clever writers are omitted they may (or may not) prove serviceable to a twentieth-century anthologist. No one but the maker of an Anthology understands its limits, and the labor of procuring copyrights, texts, and so forth; and no reader, however well informed, knows the inevitable weak spots of my own volume.

To T. B. Aldrich.

October 31, 1895.

'Tis the last day of my birth-month and the nastiest October I ever knew. No wonder you are laid up. I too have had a severe top-head cold for just one week,—just escaping, I think a relapse of the grippe which fastened upon me last spring. I suppose you will pass the winter in my beloved "Caribbee," whither I ought to fly at this moment. But 'tis doubtful whether I ever go anywhere again, unless I first *pull up stakes*, as far as New York is concerned. This very morning, sick and poor as I am, I have had *five* requests to "do things"—one of them for a poem at Plymouth, December 21st. It takes hours to say "No." I told the Pilgrims that as they had a Catholic last time, they ought to have a Jew, now—that I was only a New Englander. My dear Tom, you never acted upon a kinder impulse than when you wrote me your voluntary commendation of my "Anthology." Your letter is worth more to me than you can understand. The fact is that—certainly

not from choice or churlishness, but owing to matters wholly beyond my control—I have been an absolute hermit for eighteen months. . . . The work has been most laborious—but *nineteen-twentieths* of it consisted of finding the authors' works, getting permission and facts, and, above all, verifying copy, proofs, etc. The selections have been *chosen* rapidly—almost at a glance—although of course I knew the field to a great extent.

Therefore I have been doubtful, since the book was ready, as to the taste and wisdom of what I have done. I have more than once felt nervous with respect to its standing the test of *your* keen and perfect judgment, for there is no living man so able and so fastidious in all matters of this sort, and none with a longer and better knowledge of English poetry. Your letter took the greatest load off my mind, and delighted me beyond measure. "There's none knows like a fellow of the craft," and you are first of the two or three whose fellowship I consider. Thank you, over and over again, for your prompt and hearty *setting of my mind at ease.*

To James B. Kenyon.

November 26, 1897.

As this is the night-but-one before Thanksgiving, let me begin the festival by heartily thanking *you* for cheering me up, so voluntarily, with respect to my "Anthology." When a man has been long engaged upon a piece of work so delicate, and beyond reach of any peer to whom he can apply for critical aid (by this I refer merely to my isolated residence), he ends his book in a very doubtful state of mind. I was quite uncertain whether the best judges would approve my *system* or my choice of selections, until letters from Mr. Aldrich, Dr. Garnett, yourself, and one or two others, gave me more satisfaction than various perfunctory reviews. And I now find myself looking through the book with as curious and sincere an interest as if I had not compiled it. By the way, no one who has *not* made an Anthology has the least idea of the heroic labor involved: procuring texts, copying selections, perfecting proofs, obtaining copyrights, etc. I could have earned *$10,000.* by writing, while editing this compilation.

To H. C. Hunter.

March 14, 1902.

In returning thanks for the invitation to be present at the Dinner of the Canadian Society, in honor of Dr. W. H. Drummond, I

sincerely regret that an engagement, from which I cannot withdraw, will deprive me of the pleasure of sharing in your tribute to that genuine and delightful poet. There has been none of the many occasions in which I have participated this season quite so attractive in its nature, as far as my own tastes and feelings are concerned. I would much value the privilege, which you graciously have extended, of making some remarks prefatory to the readings by Mr. Roberts and Mr. Carman; in fact, of saying to the faces of that brace of minstrels which your North has lent us, what I more than once have said and written—how much they have provided for lovers of life, melody and imagination, on both sides of the border that unites, not divides, the colonial and republican dominions.

Especially would I delight in meeting, and paying honor to your guest of the evening. For it has been a grief to me that his first collection of ballads was not available until several years after I had acquainted myself with the poetry of Canada and, charmed by its freshness, its redolence of the forest and the island shores, —had made a liberal showing of it in a "Victorian Anthology." I never open that book without feeling that its pages would be enriched by "The Habitant's" story of the season's rounds, by the exile's longing for "De Bell of St. Michel," and by the homecomings of Bateese. This enrichment I hope to have the privilege of giving it in time. Most of us are content if we sing an old thing in a new way, or a new thing in an old way. Dr. Drummond has achieved the truest of lyrical successes; that of singing new songs, and in a new way. His poems are idyls as true as those of Theocritus or Burns or our own poet of the Biglow papers. But more of this letter will seem prosy when all your table is, in Dr. Drummond's phrase, "Laughing itself in the face."

CHAPTER XXV

EDGAR ALLAN POE

On his seventieth birthday, in a copy of a booklet containing his original essay on Edgar Allan Poe, Mr. Stedman wrote: "This was the first 'vellum' book brought out in America (since the early years of parchment binding). I had suggested to Kegan Paul, London, that he would do well to imitate the Lemarre (Paris) books. K. P. & Co. did so, with their profitable series which began with a reprint of "The Vicar of Wakefield." Then I induced Houghton, Mifflin & Company, Boston, to put this Poe essay into this form. It was nearly ready for the press, when Mr. Aldrich asked me to hold it back, so that he could bring out a selection from his songs and ballads in the same style. I was 'easy' enough to assent, and the two booklets were issued simultaneously by Houghton, Mifflin & Company. This copy was one of a lot sent to England with Sampson Low's imprint." Later the essay was revised and included in "Poets of America." A cloud-burst of letters deluged Mr. Stedman when the essay first appeared in *Scribner's Monthly*, May, 1880,—some from admirers, others from those whose views were widely divergent:

There is one other reason for my writing and it is that I have just received the May number of *Scribner's*, and find in it your very charming article on Edgar Poe. I do not think that within its compass we have had anything so exhaustive on the man, and so appreciative, through clearest insight, on the writer. I see, if you will forgive me for saying so, that the old proverb about setting a thief to catch a thief holds good in regard to poetry. If you want to discover the highest and the subtler beauties of a poet, you must have a poet to do the critic's office. I would write more to you but my sense of the felicity of your prose, as revealed

once more in this essay, tends very much to check the flow of my eloquence. I am necessarily somewhat halting and self conscious in style when addressing one whose writings show such a keen artistic sense of the niceties of literary expression, therefore do not expect more from me beyond the repetition of my thanks and the reassurance that I shall always be. . . . [*Richard Whiteing.*]

Won't you let me tell you how fascinated I have been by your searching and beautiful essay on Poe? You make me feel ashamed of myself that I can not see in his poetry what you see; but I am with you in your words about his prose, so lucid, direct and forcible. That suggestion of yours about early Ethiopian influences having affected the peculiar repetends of his measure, strikes me as something delightfully ingenious. I don't for a moment mean that it is not a defensible hypothesis; but those little side-theories are so pleasant in our day of autocratic, *a priori* and sterile criticism. [*Edgar Fawcett.*]

I suppose that you know more about Poe than any living man, and here, and now, I take off my hat to you for that exquisite study of Poe, the Poet, wherewith you delighted us several years ago, and which Sainte-Beuve himself might have envied you. . . . Your industry is wonderful—admirable. [*W. Gordon McCabe.*]

And T. B. Aldrich: "When I read one of your critical papers—such a one as the Poe,—for instance—I envy you the permanent regard which your writings of this sort must bring you. It is, however, a generous kind of envy that heartily admires, and longs to go and do likewise, and can't. I took great pleasure in your subtile presentation of Poe's complex nature. The criticism was altogether admirable and penetrating and leaves no one else anything to say on the subject."

From W. C. Brownell.

You know how strong the habit, which literary work fixes, of turning an impression into expression, is; and as I do not do *Scribner's* someone else will have the opportunity of saying in the *Nation* how fine the essay on Poe is; and I am left corked up, accordingly, though fizzing interiorly in a prodigious way. Which

is my apology for writing this to you personally—you will get scores of similar messages, and I shall not refrain from adding mine lest you be put to the bother of acknowledging it, for that will be quite needless. After reading what you have written, moreover, I am impressed to a degree which obliterates any distrust of my own judgment—in general and upon Poe in particular I do distrust it. But now and then one reads something which has an air about it that makes one feel quite certain of his opinion of it, however unfamiliar he may be with its subject. Even criticism, in which truth appears in its most materialized form, and to which, in admeasuring it, the standard of acquaintanceship needs to be applied, now and then appeals to one with instinctive directness. And as I should know Arnold's lectures were sound if I had never read Homer, I know you are right about Poe as well as if I had read him more recently, more thoroughly, and I may add—in a humility I did not feel an hour ago—more extensively; I think you have shown that an inch is not as good as an ell of him. I have long fancied this was true of yourself, and the only regret that occurred to me just now was that you had no more space. As it is you have a marvel of artistic compression—so artistic, indeed, that it shows no marks of compression save that unmistakable sign of clear cut carving that to the initiated always betrays the fulness and fertility which must have preceded it. At the same time—to take what I have often thought one of the most striking examples of inexhaustibility—voluminous as Rabelais is we could easily stand more of him. And I hope when the time comes you may give us what you have suppressed here. If I should "garrul" much more, however, I should very likely demonstrate the worthlessness of any eulogy of mine; it has the merit of being very sincere, and is proffered with a diffidence that is tempered by reliance upon your friendliness.

From T. W. Higginson.

I read with much pleasure your paper on Poe, and have sent you my briefer one in "Short Stories." On most points your judgment seems to me admirable. I think you rather over-do the Southern element in Poe. I see no reason to doubt his own statement as to being born in Boston and the antagonism he felt to it was that of an estranged child—his temperament was Southern, as we say, but not more so than that of many pure New Englanders

—*e. g.* Rufus Choate. Then you speak so well of Gill's conceited and trashy book—see my notion of it in the *Nation*, some two years ago, and you seem to commend Poe's "repetends" as good art, whereas they seem to me his downfall into mannerism,—see, in my "Short Stories," the comparison between the original "Lenore" in Lowell's "Pioneer," and the spoiled later version, measured off in lengths. Again note my description of Mrs. Whitman and see how inappropriate your phrase of "a veiled old woman" seems—that was not her style. If I cite myself it is not as *authority*, but to save time in rewriting. These are about all the things I don't like in your admirable paper; which I liked better than yours on Bayard Taylor, whom I thought you overrated.

I have had some correspondence with Ingram; I think he does (as you do) too much mercy to Poe's criticisms—his habit of mind was simply villainous in these it seems to me and did much harm; because his praise was equally blind and baseless with his hate; though of course his wonderful genius sometimes showed itself. How unworthy was his treatment of his half crazy kinsman, Ellery Channing, who has a vein of genius as pure and fine as Poe's own, and one of whose lines

"If my bark sinks 'tis to another sea"

will be as immortal as the hope he describes.

Come and see me if you are in Boston—we shall be here till June and the Broadway (Cambridge) horse-cars pass the house.

To the Same.

May 13, 1880.

I returned from the few days' trouting in Pennsylvania—which I *will* have when the trees bud out—to find, first, a *Crisis* in Wall St.; second, much correspondence, including your kind and welcome letter, which I've been trying to answer for a week. The interest felt in Poe is curious. Since my *Scribner's* article appeared, I have received over a score of letters about it—to my vast surprise. Of them all, yours is the most valued and significant, as I long since learned to care more for your censure or endorsement than for those of any other comrade in letters.

Just a few words, *seriatim*, on the points made by you. Poe doubtless *was* born in Boston, but was none the less a Southerner

by blood and nature, and hence my diagnosis. In temperament there was a good deal of the Southerner in Choate; and Poe in fact, was of the same stuff with the Booths and other Virginians and Marylanders. The gift of genius usually seems to *be too much for any Southerner to carry*.

I am not sure that I saw your review of Gill's book, but it could not have been too severe to please me. Brougham said of Wallach, in his famous after-dinner story, "O, he's no actor!"—and Gill is no author, but a camp-follower among us. The fact is, however, that he did work like a dog to get the stray bones of Poe's early life, etc., and as he (Gill) had pestered me for months with attentions, I did give him credit, in a foot-note, for doing as well as he knew how. His badly-written book contains more *information* as to Poe than any other "Memoir." Ingram is not much more than an English Gill. All these fellows are under pint-measure.

But what have I done, my dear Colonel, that you should accuse me of portraying that poetic and pathetic Saint, Mrs. Whitman, under the guise which I intended for Mrs. Clemm! Of course I supposed you and others to be familiar with all our New York traditions. Mrs. Clemm, wearing her rusty black, haunted newspaper offices, here and elsewhere, for years,—talking of her "Eddie." I must examine carefully that sentence, and see if you had the slightest ground for such an error. If so, it must be changed at once.

Your *Literary World* notice of Poe I read and cut out, when it appeared, and was replying to it in my comments upon Poe's critical work. The latter was very much as you described it, but I could not agree with you that it was *worthless*, and gave my reason therefor. The little book you send me has a grave fault. It is too short; its sins are all of omission; the notices are little marvels —are all that Poe's *should have* been—and you should have gone on with a dozen others. Never, I pray you, set *me* forth in so exquisite an epigram as that sentence about James's "cosmopolitanism!" I am sure you would find my weak point as surely, and I pray you, by our common blood and breeding, to forbear!

Speaking of Channing,—how thoroughly he has the traditional poetic temperament: how poetic his *moods and tenses* compared with those of such a life as mine! Now and then I see something rare, in the strict sense, from his pen, in the Springfield *Republican*, or elsewhere. He is an idealist.

To the *Athenæum*.

May 26, 1880.

In the *Athenæum* of May 15, Mr. John H. Ingram makes a sharp assault upon me for a recent article in *Scribner's Monthly*, entitled "Edgar Allan Poe." I referred in that article to the fact that writers upon Poe have been divided chiefly into two classes,—the poet's blind devotees, and those who have found nothing good in him. It is natural that a judicial review of his life and works should fail to please either of these classes. Mr. Ingram thinks I have not done justice to his own services as a biographer. I mentioned him politely, and certainly meant him no harm. But it is too much to expect that a critic who ventures to review a poet in whom certain writers claim a right of property, should also take sides in the "irrepressible conflict" over the merits of their respective biographers. So far as the existing results of the labors of Mr. Ingram or Mr. Gill, or any other of these gentlemen, are concerned, there still is room for all the improvements that are to distinguish the forthcoming work by Mr. Ingram—which I courteously have advertised for *him*.

Mr. Ingram goes out of the record when he associates my review with any article by other persons. He must have read very loosely the portions in which his own name is not mentioned if he considers it "depreciative of Poe's moral character." In stating expressly that Poe was not "immoral" the worst charge I brought against him was that he lacked strength of will. What possible "motive" could I have for circulating "calumnies" upon a poet who belonged to a former generation and for whose genius I have expressed nothing but admiration? If I know my own heart, the review was written with tender sympathy, "with charity for all, with malice toward none," and it thus has been received by all critics in America and England except my present assailant. In preparing it, I resolved that I would not be drawn into any "Poe controversy," and therefore shall say no more on this subject.

It is hardly worth while to quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, even though we have hazel eyes.

London, England, 12. 6. 80.

Edgar Poe and his Critics.

Dear Sir:

As your letter in to-day's issue of the *Athenæum* closes public discussion on the subject it deals with, permit me to trouble you

with a few supplementary private words. I do this, not because some of your friends are my friends, but because the tone of your answer is so much more courteous and considerate than those which I am accustomed to receive from American *literati* on this subject of Poe. And pray dismiss from your mind the idea that I wish to "claim a right of property" in this subject: so far from entertaining so foolish a fancy, I have more than once offered to citizens of your country the free and unacknowledged use of my material, only asking that they would do justice to Poe. It was this suggestion, apparently, that hatched Mr. Gill's scheme. . . .

You ask what motive you could "have for circulating 'calumnies' upon a poet who belonged to a former generation?" Intentionally, I should be the last to deem you capable of so doing, but—you do circulate them in your article and even speak approvingly of Briggs's disgusting sketch. You refer continually to Mr. Stoddard's sketch of Poe:—a sketch only second in malice to Griswold's—perhaps, unintentional on his part, although he belonged to the *same* generation as Poe, and has not scrupled to express his hatred of the man and *his inability to judge him as a poet.* It is this inability that has rendered *his* "calumnies" less potent than Griswold's. I am the last person to claim that Poe was a "perfect being," and so far from being "a blind devotee," my vindicatory sketch was blamed by some leading English publications for its revelations of his faults and failings. Had he been a European, his reputation would have been different: Griswolds, Mrs. Stowes and *id genus omne* do not flourish so well in old soil, I fancy.

But I cannot reconcile some parts of your article with other parts: some so appreciative and sympathetic, and some so repeating obsolete scandal: Reading it in the light of former papers in *Scribner's* on Poe, it seems as if some evil genius had gone over your critique and revised it to accord with editorial consistency.

Of course, I do not venture to criticise your critical views but I should be glad to have pointed out to me *some* of the "frequent slips," and "inexactness" in *Eureka.*

And now, pardon me this lengthy and hasty scrawl which, had I leisure to rewrite, might be more clearly and courteously worded, but, believe me, is only sent as in recognition of the quite unexpected tone of your reply to my letter. By the way, my new "Life of Poe" is out and Widdleton now has, I believe, a supply

of copies. I should be glad if you could obtain a copy from him, and by that judge fairly and unprejudicedly both of your countryman and of

Yours truly,
JOHN H. INGRAM.

(Marginal) P. S. I may add that your paper has excited great interest among all my American correspondents. J. H. I.

To John H. Ingram.

June 30, 1880.

It is needless to say that the tone of your letter is more gratifying to me than was that of the sudden and unexpected blast which you gave me in the *Athenæum*. My occupations barely give me time for my serious work in prose and verse, and wholly preclude me from joining in newspaper controversy. The article on Poe is merely a chapter in a book upon which I am now engaged, and will appear therein, with proper emendations. So *I* have done with Poe. As you have accused me of severity, and others accuse me of undue leniency, I think my *critical* attitude can not be very far wrong. What I said of his life was merely incidental to my main purpose as a critic of his poetry and prose. I leave you and others to judge of the details of his life. And now please observe: The Preface to your memoir of Poe, in Widdleton's standard 4-volume edition of his works, 1876,[1] declared that you were indebted to Gill for certain assistance. Again, Gill's last edition was the latest memoir, and I had to be guided by it, more or less. Again, I found that you erroneously stated that Poe had visited Europe in early manhood, and feared that I might reprint other mistakes—which, of course, are corrected in your new edition. In short, I did the best I could, and gave little credit to anybody. When I return to New York I shall procure and read your new memoir. Meantime, I see that the *Independent* of the 24th instant, pitches into us all, editorially, and especially into you for your error in confusing Briggs with Dunn English. (I saw your mistake, but didn't care to mention it in my letter to the *Athenæum*.) Mr. Stoddard also has an article in the *Independent*. Permit me to say that I had no knowledge of either article until I saw them in print. Poe exercised a great fascination over me, in my youth.

[1] I see that in the edition just out, this clause is omitted from the Preface. Your publisher, with all his biographers, confuses us sadly. [E. C. S.]

I knew his works by heart, and as you see, have analyzed them closely and with more than ordinary critical *reverence*. It seems to me that his *Tales* were his finest and strongest works. I remember disagreeing with you in your estimate of Stoddard's poem on Poe's death. He *meant* to write with feeling, I know: but he is as crotchety as others, when engaged in biographical exploration. . . . I assure you that he is a *formidable* adversary, and a man of talent.

But Stedman throughout his life was to figure in matters concerning Poe:—To the Editors of the *Century* on October 31, 1881, he writes:

Your Poe *Ms.* is a curiosity. If it is in good preservation I would pay a moderate sum for it, as an autograph, and as an illustration of Poe's literary habits. . . . Much of this *Ms.* is quite familiar to me. If I were half as sure of a future life as I am of this statement, I shouldn't care how soon this life ended.

Poe had a way of working over and re-using much of his matter. He never let a line of Poe be lost. This *Ms.* doubtless was prepared as a part of his series "Marginalia," and *may* have been once printed as it stands. Probably, however, it was the last that he wrote of this series, and not printed, owing to one of the ordinary, sudden, terminations of his connection with the magazine. At all events, he used the various portions of it in various other articles —most of which are preserved in the Griswold collection of his works. They are still to be found, mostly, in the latest standard and four-volume edition. For convenience's sake I refer you to Widdleton's,—the date of my new set being 1876.

You will see by the slips I have pinned along the *Ms.*, that substantially the whole of it—with the exception of the analytic note upon "The Wandering Jew"—is already in print. That note *undoubtedly* was published in some one of the many journals and magazines upon which Poe served.

I always have considered Poe's note (herein) upon "inversion" and "poetic license" as thoroughly sound and acute.

He invariably prepared his *critical* "copy" in the shape of a long "roll," as you describe this *Ms.* Please ask Mr. Patterson if he will sell the latter, or you may wish to buy it for yourselves. Observe what a weakness Poe had, in the use of italics—and also that he ends a sentence with a preposition, in the very note where he rebukes another man for doing the same thing.

To C. D. Warner.

December 20, 1882.

. . . As for Poe. I had forgotten that you *ever* asked me to do him up for your series. You requested me to undertake Cooper—in whom I had no special interest—and hinted that some analytic genius, like James, would be required for Poe's case.

But it would have made no difference. I groan at midnight, and tear my hair in dreams, because *things* ("Things are of the snake!") prevent me from more rapid completion of my "Poetry in America." I have solemnly sworn to undertake no other *prose* book till my *capo d'opera* (and incubus) shall be out of the way. Since handing in my Emerson essay, October 15th, business and *job-work* have made it impossible for me to begin the next chapter.

Get thee behind me, Sathanas! I should not mind extending my monograph on Poe—although so many books have recently been devoted to his life and genius; but to do it as well as I *could* —and nothing would tempt me to do it otherwise—would be a greater effort than I can afford to make.

By the way, speaking of "the final word about Poe"—where did you get that phrase? It appeared, word for word, in several of the notices of my late essay on him, both here and in London. Therefore I suspect there always will be one more "final word" by some new interpreter.

I did take a couple of hours, last Saturday, down-town, for a letter to the last Sunday's *Tribune* on Aerial Navigation. Apropos of our after-dinner talk, you ought to have read it.

To William Winter.

February 28, 1883.

Nothing could be more gratifying to me than to receive an honor at your hands, and in your "very parfait gentle" way. So I have wrested with myself to make the path clear for its acceptance, but 'tis, I assure you, quite impossible!

I am thrown, and debarred, by several considerations:

1. Two years ago I resolved to read no more *poems* in public, until the Bi-Centennial of the United States, 1976—an occasion for which I am already engaged. Seriously, I do not regret, and would not recall, any that I *have* delivered, but for some time past have declined (numerous) invitations on the strength of this resolution.

2. More important. I cannot, and will not, figure as a *Poe specialist*. Have written an essay on Poe, have printed a *book* about him. At this moment am writing the Preface to Harper's Illustrated Edition (Doré and Poe). But for the latter fact I *might* have been willing to pronounce a brief "oration" next September—certainly not a poem.

3. We *all* have done something for the memory of Poe. Yesterday, in fact, I re-read your own lyric, in the account of the Memorial Proceedings at Baltimore. *Nothing could be more adequate, more appropriate, than* the delivery of that poem, this time *by yourself*, as part of the exercises next September. *I suggest that you should deliver it, as the poem of the occasion.*

4. I remember that you came handsomely to the front in the Gill-Poe business, and saved the fund—and I appreciate your present burden and desire. But, with all these repeated "Memorials" (it will be Boston's turn next) and the Birthday "Symposia" of Irving, etc., *life is not worth living* nowadays.

This may be—nay is, good brother—a Stage Tribute to Poe, but I gave $50. towards it, and never could understand why the dramatic profession should have been moved to pay a tribute to our lyric poet. Of course, though, Gill dragooned them into it.

Finally, my dear Winter, I intend and *hope* to be absent from the country next Fall.

My personal respect and affection for you have made me state all these reasons for declining the only request you have made of me for years. Of course I shall be full of remorse till you ask something within my power to accomplish.

To Brander Matthews.

April 1, 1883.

I can't find anything to give you in exchange for the French *100th Night*, unless it be this old copy of a famous old book which I picked up long ago. And as I'm not a "book-collector," it should be in your possession and not in mine.

Am glad to have the Poe—which is curious and spirited, as to its drawings. And have you noticed how greatly the French translator has improved on Poe's rather clumsy attempts at humor, by putting in his delicate French touches? It is an "extended" not a literal translation. Have just compared it with the original. Thanks for your many and always delicate good turns.

. . . Have just handed the *Harpers* my long "Comment"—the preface to the Doré designs for "The Raven." Have made a rather poetical thing of it, I fancy, and it is serving as the occasion for a little "fine writing." Positively my last appearance *in re* Poe. It would be dreadful to be classed with the Poe maniacs.

As to the life of Poe—my boy, *there* is a fine chance for *you*. Do it yourself. All the American "Lives" are careless, scrappy, hack-work. The Ingram Life in two volumes is careful, but raucid and big. That, and Gill's, furnish you all the *materials*, however. What we do need is a compact, kind, judicial, poetic, *interesting* Life, in one volume just the size of the *American Men of Letters*. Write it on the lines which I suggest, and you will make a hit. Do it yourself. I am unable to fulfill engagements already made.

Have been writing two savage letters so that this note is a genuine relief. One to C—— P——, who is a nuisance with his Club and *cheek*. Have declined three times his requests to dine or speak at that Club. He now wants me to supplement Dr. Holmes with fifteen minutes talk on Emerson. Well, New York is at last becoming *too much* of a "literary centre." The other to one Welsh, who wrote the "History of English Life" stealing from everybody, and who has the impudence to request me (whom he never saw) to "defend" his "work" in the newspapers from "the attempts made to crush it!"

What does Lang mean by the "Pass of Brander"? Is it Scotch?

To T. B. Aldrich.

December 11, 1883.

Thoughtful of you to give me the pleasure of reading the *Atlantic* a "leetle" ahead of "hoi polloi." I lighted, quite unexpectedly, upon the section devoted to illustrated books, and of course was gratified—as the *Harpers* will be—to see that you give "The Raven" first innings. You know my private view of poor Doré's last drawings is not very different from your critic's. But I want to say that, setting quite aside his good words for me, I am struck by the subtle and analytic distinctions of his criticism. They are most admirable—done by no novice. His explanation of the *difference* between the genius of Poe and that of Doré I feel to be true—but it was one I could not make in my Preface:—my business ended when I showed how far they were *alike*. But I

confess to learning something from your man's admirable two pages.

The *Post* sent a critic to attend Irving's Hamlet in Philadelphia. The review, next day, in that paper, exactly matched my own notions. Booth had a *rousing* first night here, though we, of course, were not present. Good. I was afraid the New Yorkers might not turn out.

Edwin and Edwina passed Sunday evening with us. Never knew him so well and so interesting.

Did you ever read Montaigne? Why should Professor Arnold rate him, of all men, higher than Emerson? Each of Emerson's sentences contains a *thought*, an image, or a flash of beauty. Now, Montaigne's Essays are largely quotations from all the Ancients, etc., and illustrative incidents,—interspersed with his ripe and healthy wisdom.

C—— is a genius, but I think he is bound to be rich—and playing his cards for all they are worth. There is something fascinating to me in his apparent (or real?) *naïveté*.

My troubles are not yet ended. A few lions still in the way.

To another friend, Stedman writes: "One must own that there is something very funny in poor Doré's unintentional pictures of George William Curtis in a dressing gown, wrestling with an arm-chair, and finally getting thrown. And where he opens 'wide the door' is like nothing but the butler who does the same and announces *On a servi!* or *Le Dîner est servi!*

"I don't know that there *is* much suggestion of 'The Raven' in Pike's stuff, nor was Poe's ear ever led 'unintentionally captive.' But I suspect he often laid hands on what he wanted—took his key, and used it as men of genius will, and as they have a right to. But he never tolerated such license in others. My! what a sharp eye he kept on poachers!"

To John Esten Cooke.

February 4, 1884.

. . . Meanwhile I have separated it [your letter] from the miscellaneous pile on my desk, and, in fact, have ventured to show it to

Stoddard and one other friend, apropos of your singularly judicial and suggestive remarks about Poe. Culture and talent do make a man broad—few Virginians, I wit, are so cosmopolitan as yourself,—few, certainly, would look so impartially upon Poe's temper and conduct. Well: he doubtless had little moral sense and great selfishness, but I still think that his nature would have softened in a more congenial epoch, and with a better return for his labor. It surely must be a dangerous thing to live in the midst of ugliness with a passion for beauty and the perception of it—to have eyes and live among the blind, to have a voice and belong to a race of deaf-mutes. There was no "evolution" in Poe's *character;* youths of genius are selfish, inconsiderate, and Poe was a youth to the day of his death.

To J. H. Hager.

October 13, 1885.

I am obliged to you for having written your clear and admirable refutation of the *Critic* letter on Poe's character, and for having enabled me to read it. We had quite an indignation meeting, at our breakfast-table, when the issue containing Harrington's outburst came in. Of course it would be too much to expect the *Critic* to withhold a letter calculated to stir up an excitement, but its writer—if his charges were true—certainly is guilty as you suggest, of horribly bad taste. But it is plain that he is still rankling with a most *provincial* and ignorant sense of personal wrong—that Poe's actions were utterly misconstrued by him and his friends. In my book to be published on the 17th (of which I enclose Houghton's announcement) I have laid stress on the fact that Poe, with all his faults, was *not* "a libertine," and I see not the slightest cause to change my opinion. In fact, he was the least "sensual" of men and authors; his dramatic "grand passions" were all of the heart and head and imagination rather than of the body. But your presentation of the whole matter is quite irrefragable. I hope you will send it to the harrowing Harrington.

To Edwin B. Hill.

July 1, 1888.

It may please you to know that I have compared the two *filings*, on the outside of the sheet, with a letter of Poe's written in 1841. The words "John Neal" and the "June 8th 1840" are evidently

in Poe's handwriting *of that period.* His hand changed somewhat a few years afterward—as he took measureless pains with it. The filing *inside* ("John Neal to E. A. Poe") is apparently by another hand.

The rare thing about the letter is that it is so characteristic of John Neal! Five years later even he would have hesitated before tripping Poe in his grammar. And think of Poe's Homeric wrath at having to pay twenty-five cents postage for a lesson in "style," instead of obtaining Neal's assistance in pushing his magazine! And to be asked—"Are you Irish?"!! It is quite unique—this letter. I have ventured to take a copy of it, but {shall / will} not retain the *copy if you object.*

To George E. Woodberry.

February 5, 1885.

My thanks for your courteous gift of the Poe biography have been delayed until I could find a chance to read it—which I very much wished to do. Yesterday I went through it, from beginning to end, and with considerable edification. In the case of almost any modern except Poe, I should feel that such a narrative was almost *too* correct,—that the chief merit of our new and scientific literary-school was almost too conspicuous. As it is, you have pursued exactly the right course, and the one course to make your work of "definitive" value. I am glad indeed that I did not venture upon a task for which I had neither time nor conscientiousness, and which no other man would or could have performed with your patience, fidelity, judgment, and (not least) compact beauty of style. The result is a volume, (upon a life long in dispute and of curious interest,) without a superior in Houghton's Series, and with no equal save Professor Lounsbury's "Cooper."

My sincerest tribute to your research and accuracy is the fact that I sat down at once, last night, to verify the *data* in my little treatise on Poe, by yours, or correct them if need be. I was somewhat vain, upon finding that I had dodged, for the most part, the matters open to doubt. Even as to the enlistment tradition (now made history by you) I had suggested that it probably was true. Your discoveries enable me, however, to correct my one wrong statement—as to Poe's living at the Clemm house during the two years preceding his admission to West Point.

With respect to the *Poems*, I naturally am pleased to see my

feeling as to their genesis, essential nature, and relative charm, so much in accordance with your own. But I remember that you, too, are a poet. . . . You add a fine touch, which I only implied by diffusion throughout my essay, when you show that the result of Poe's lyrical effort was, after all, not the poetry of Beauty in its highest form, but the poetry of the "outcast soul."

As to his "show of learning," we are again in accord. But it was a different period—here and abroad—from our own. The idea of a scholarly and honest basis for imaginative work certainly was not current then, among romancers or reviewers—as none knows better than you, who are fresh from such a retrospect. But few "relied upon imagination" for their "facts" with a hardihood like Poe's—even in that time.

That time, however, in the order of evolution, was preliminary to our own. Hence I think that Poe's *criticisms* had "value," as well as the measure of "excellence" which we both allow them. It seems to me, to follow out your own figure, that they did hasten, to some degree, the sweep of the "Scythe of Time."

Well: you see that your book has impressed me,—or I never should write this long letter, in addition to those which I am *compelled* to write daily. And now I am going to be guilty of an officiousness that I trust you will excuse in one who still thinks Poetry to be something of worth. Fine as your critical work is, it is the finer because you are a poet,—and a page of creative and purely ideal work outweighs a book of criticism. I have not forgotten your "North Shore Watch,"—it was the one *poem* that reached me, last year, among many volumes of verse. I hope you will not set the value of professional devotion so high as to make your conscience easy if you wholly neglect a specific faculty, now out of practice, which you happen to possess. If you say, "take your own prescription"—I reply that the prose work on which I am engaged only reviews our poets for the sake of illustrating the canons of Poetry and of observing the poetic life. I neither wish, nor pretend, to be a *critic*.

Although Stedman had often declared that he would never undertake another editorial task, his conscience urged him to perform a piece of work which had also long been a hidden "fad" or hope—that of editing properly the works of Edgar Allan Poe. When in 1894, it was possible for him to respond

to a request for such an edition, he stipulated that he would accept the labor if the services of Professor Woodberry could also be secured. In 1895, "The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, newly collected and edited, with Memoir, Critical Introductions, and Notes by Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry, the Illustrations by Albert Edward Sterner," were published in ten volumes. In their General Preface in Volume I, the editors explain:

> Poe's fame has spread as widely through the world as that of any imaginative author of America; and longer neglect of the state of his text would be discreditable to men of letters among us, now that his works have passed by law into the common property of mankind. With this conviction the present edition has been undertaken, in order to ascertain and establish as accurate and complete a text of his permanent writings as the state of the sources now permits.

With generous kindness, Professor Woodberry has permitted us to examine a large correspondence with Mr. Stedman that shows again the painstaking fidelity to the most minute detail. This is surely all the more praiseworthy when it is remembered that Mr. Stedman's health was frail, and that his strength was demanded by his daily business affairs, and by "A Victorian Anthology," which compilation he was editing during these same years. "I am just now—

in the throes
Betwixt Anthologies and Poes—

(10 vols. of the latter!) but after midnight I do get a half-hour for *enjoyable* reading."

A selection from the letters to Professor Woodberry illustrate Mr. Stedman's workmanship:

"They might well show a little originality—make some sort of a new departure—with their Poe. I feel assured that our edition will not take its absolute place as the standard and ultimate one, for both the lazy reader and his library shelves, unless it is a little more impressive than the Dent

Fielding. Again I don't believe it will stand more than ten volumes in view of our American market."

June 11, 1894.

The proofs have at last come, and I am going through them. *Kindly send me replies at once to "A" and "B" of the foregoing points.* The others read at your leisure. I will not return the proofs to the printers until I receive your answers to "*A*" and "*B*."

The "copy" for Volume i. had gone to Cambridge before we had conferred about *Scenarios*, or the word would have been changed, of course. I have changed the title to *Old World Romance*, throughout.

The parenthesis () was left off "Northern Italy" by accident.

Mr. Stone desired to impress upon me that there would be, in the end, no "printer's errors"—that he would guarantee an absolute reproduction of copy. But we can look after them, all the same.

And now I am much obliged to you for careful reading, and for "taking a hack" yourself at the very trying punctuation. After changing it all I dared, I felt that I would have to go at it again on the clean proof. I get brain-weary with it, especially as to correct substitutes for the *dashes* incident to Poe's idiosyncratic *style*. You are right where you substitute ";" for ":" in the *prose*. And all your other punctuation is for the better. I enclose a slip as to occasional use of the *colon* in the *poetry*. It is sometimes the only substitute for a dash. . . .

A. *Quotations for Mottoes.* Why use them, when the author, or source, is printed *at end* of passage? It seems inelegant and superflous, and is not in accord with the *best* modern printing. Bigelow's rules are usually good, but do not cover everything. (Answer)

B. *Italics for names of books*, (e. g. "Chemical Essays," note to I. 24) Bigelow (University Press) says: "Titles of work in foreign languages"—"a good practice to put them in Italics. But in this case quotation-marks must *not also* be used." As to titles of books, *in English*, his idea is to print them in Roman with quotation marks. You are right in trying to get some fixed and uniform system for our vols. Suppose, then, I put *Absurdities* (page (I) 146) into Roman and quotations, and do the same with all *English* titles; but put all *foreign* titles, except for special cause, in Italics *without* quotations? (Answer)

C. Is it not an *absolute* rule that italicized names should not *also* have quotations "/"?

D. Chateau—role—fete. I cannot bring myself to put Chateau back into Italics—it is so completely Anglicized. So I drop the (^), and write simply Chateau. But the other two words? Still in a transition state, are they not? I have put them back into Italics and retained the accent; *rather* against my will. Since you retain the (¨) in German proper names, and the cedilla and the (~) in certain French and Spanish words, I don't see how one can make an *absolute* rule against the French circumflex (^) etc. And I think the whole movement of good modern printing (which is a revision to the best early work) is toward plain roman, and a reliance on the reader's sense.

E. *Symposium*, 211, B, xxix. O. K. if you take the risk of getting stuck on future non-verifications.

F. As to spelling: I told them to "*follow Worcester*," except where a special variation is indicated by us. We don't always like Worcester, but a standard must be adopted for the printers, and I take it you prefer Worcester's orthography to Webster's—for this work?

G. You observe that I retain Poe's frequent (English phrase) Italics, where they *really* intensify the dramatic purpose, for the intelligent reader. Otherwise, not. . . .

I. There were three "inserts" by you (or Malone?) on the margin of "The Cask of Amontillado," which I supposed you got from some original source. I see you have knocked them out.

October 13, 1894.

It occurs to me that it may help you out if I have my boys mount the three critical series for you (Volumes vi–viii), as in the matter of Volumes i–iv. I think it can be done, with duplicate sets, by exercising care with respect to division and backing of the respective criticisms and what-not. If you will send the duplicate pages to 16 Broad Street, I will try it. There is considerable of that mounting-paper still left at my office.

You are a masterful final-proof reviser, as befits the text-expert. Some of my work, in those horrid Blackwood sketches—for example, seems to be done on the principle of the Hebraic reapers, who always left something for the gleaners! I'll try hard to point the Literati more thoroughly. The truth is that my original prose,

my own, is punctuated so thoroughly as I write it—and so in accordance with my style, such as it is—that I never have any doubt what to do on the proofs. But Poe's pot-boilers!

October 29, 1894.

I was afraid you were going to be ill, as I talked with you at the Century. Well: the worst of the *rush* is over, and you must be good to yourself for a while. Have had a good deal of sharp correspondence with Mr. Rhodes, about the title-page, and their premature printing of the Roman-numeral pages of Volume ii. He is a gentleman, though, and takes my growling kindly. Have forwarded your "Pym" title-page, but I fear it upsets the paging of the book, again! If you have *any* prefatory notes for Volumes i, ii, iii, send them on *at once*, or the preliminary paging will be all in the air.

Perhaps you will read my Introduction to the Tales. It is critical, and I hope compact and yet smoothly written. As I have reread the Tales three times, during our labors, I felt competent to write it. You will see I have discussed: 1—Romance; 2—Poe and Hoffman; 3—the several kinds or groups of Tales; 4—his ideas of Beauty; 5—his claims to scholarship, and his equipment; 5—brain-power; 6—his style; 7—lack of passion; 8—dramatic quality, humor, etc; 9—display of his own temperament; 10—his influence on literature, and his vogue abroad; 11—summing up. Will mount the three volumes, if you will indicate order of Contents.

December 3, 1894.

I envy your having still the Old Colony home to visit at Thanksgiving. The Stedman *homesteads* no longer exist. All of those who lived in them are either underground, or with far apart bidding-places under alien skies. There are proud and prosperous Stedmans in Hartford (my birthplace), but they are of my generation—and of *that* I am the head by seniority. Yet in youth I often ate Thanksgiving fowl and pie, with thirty of my own kindred at one table. Even you, I fear, in time will become acclimated here—perhaps not even go Eastward to vote. But I hope you had a season of comfort—above all, that your Mother was able to be with you—you have not spoken recently of her health.

The delay in actual publication of our Volumes i–iii is quite trying. They will get scant attention, so close upon Christmas.

It seems that all the sheets go to Chicago for binding. When Mr. Rhodes was here, he told me that the large-paper edition had been fully taken up. But what I am after is a strong and steady sale of the "popular" style, and a place for it in everybody's library. Am sure that the volumes will be thought rather small in size for a standard work, despite their being so much larger than Mr. Stone desired. I now wish we had *fought* for "eight volumes, 12 mo."—say 400 pages each, and somewhat larger type.

But I am writing you, to mention a single word, in your full, admirable, and compact *Notes*, which I hope will strike your "final eye" as being both impolitic, and unusual in the definitive presentment of a famous author. As you really aided me so much by the suggestions in revision of my "Introduction," I won't hesitate to say my say on just this one point—though a little circuitously. When I wrote, in the course of Duty, an elaborate paper on Whitman fifteen years ago, I had not only the E. A. Poeites, then living and aggressive, but all the rabid Whitmaniacs, straight before my mind's eye. My resolve was to set my idea of his merits and demerits plainly forth, without giving him or his satellites a plausible ground for the slightest charge of unfriendliness on my part. It has been acknowledged by him, them, and others, that I drew their fire successfully.

Now the word—the mere word—"Untrustworthy," page 291, will be a red rag to all the Mavericks here and abroad. It will be seized upon as evidence of animosity to Poe; justifiable as it may be in view of the illustrations given. If I were you I would let the latter speak for themselves—would be content with showing that Poe did not consider himself bound by any "book before him." The Poeites will at once say that Poe was not a statistician but a romancer, that he was not writing history but effective fiction, that *tant pis*, etc., that Shakespeare and Dumas did the same, that E. A. P. was quite right to exaggerate length, size, light and shade, just as a painter does—to strengthen his effects, and so on; furthermore, that he was writing for the provinces, which could not detect his fetches, and that he probably wrote from memory, anyhow, and used quotations—after the loose method then common—to show that he *had* some authority for his statements.

Don't give them any chance to talk in this wise, and to say of us—"how absolute the knaves are!" As far as I can see, you have skilfully avoided it throughout, with this one exception; yet

you have shown up the facts so that they impress the reader most forcibly.

On October 31, 1895, to his friend, T. B. Aldrich, Stedman says, "With 'Poe' nearing an end, I am planning to make radical changes, and get freedom of some sort—even if I become a Zingara! It will take some months to clear away the back stuff, but if we all live, we'll all get together again.—You will greatly admire Woodberry's work in Volume X of 'Poe.' We both have had heroic labor on the whole series, which of course don't *show* or pay us—except in barks and bites from the fourth-raters. *I* have had one of the jobs which R. H. S. delights in,—that is to write three new essays on a theme I long ago got done with!"

"What a task," writes Jonathan Trumbull, "it must have been to edit this edition in the scholarly and complete way in which it is done! You have really done for Poe something that reminds me of what Dr. Furness is doing for Shakespeare."

To Horace White.

May 9, 1903.

Nothing this year has given me a purer pleasure—a "more honest joy"—than your surprise-note concerning the new and rather costly edition of the Stedman-Woodberry Poe. The generous impulse under which you wrote it has made me more content throughout a troubled week, and it is full time that I should tell you so. I am proud to know that you wished to possess those volumes, and well satisfied to have you read my three critical essays—on the Tales, Poems, and Reviews—as they doubtless represent my later prose in the direction it is most fain to take. Woodberry's "Life of Poe" was, I think, intentionally colorless but *trustworthy*, and his Notes, Variorum, etc., are admirable. We rather pride ourselves on our *symphonic* arrangement of the Tales—as indicated in the Chapter of "Contents," Vols. i, ii, iii. I *repunctuated the entire writings*. We went to the original source for all that Poe ever wrote, but did *not* include many of his reprints of the same matter throughout his workaday life—nor did we think it good editing to do so, nor *do* we, maugre the

method of the Professor Harrison (University of Virginia) Crowell edition, recently out and much advertised by its editor.

The Pittsburgh people, by mistake, received a heavier paper than they had ordered for this your edition, and it was too late to have the manufacturers correct their order. Otherwise, the book was gratifyingly made. The first set sent out was presented by the Century Club to Mr. Jusserand—at the reception to him—and he was delighted.

Our evening at the Colonial was fine, but I was chagrined when I found it was not the *public* Dinner so richly your due, and which must come anon,—and "may I be there to see," as Cowper sang.

To Alfred Russell Wallace.

March 22, 1904.

I wished to obtain, from the files at my home, some matter bearing upon the origin of "Leonanie"—: This I enclose and will ask you kindly to mail it to me. There are more clippings somewhere but my secretary cannot discover them.

Eight years ago, Professor Woodberry and I completed our "definitive" ten-volume edition of Poe's works, upon a synthetic and tasteful re-arrangement, and after laboriously going to *first sources* for everything attributed to the poet, romancer, critic, journalist. We even included a *variorum* of his poems—from their earliest dates. We omitted *nothing* from our edition, except inferior *duplicates* and even *triplicates* of things which he sold and published more than once. I believe our edition is now the standard with poets and scholars, although a later work has appeared, containing, in many small volumes, the newspaper "repetitions" which should not at this date be brought up against this sore-tried author. From my boyhood I took the profoundest interest in Poe's wonderful melodies, romances, critical essays. He died the night before my 16th birthday. Griswold collected his writings *at once*, and the first two volumes were eagerly enjoyed by me in my Freshman year at Yale. Naturally, I never lost my interest, and in after life it came to me to edit his entire *reliquiæ*. But, as long ago as 1880, I wrote the somewhat inclusive essay to which you seem to allude, and which was afterwards published in "Poets of America." When it appeared, first, in the old *Scribner's Monthly* (now the *Century*), I really think it was the first critico-biographical survey of Poe's career and output that was *both* sympathetic and

judicial. You doubtless have observed that for decades all the writers on Poe were either his blind and sentimental worshippers—often second and third rate hangers-on—or inartistic moralists, bitterly adverse, and incompetent to recognize independently the beauty and originality of his creations and the value of his critical perception.

But I have gone beyond your patience in this endeavor to show why I have chanced to pay strict attention to all waifs, good or bad, that have been attributed to Poe. Until within the last ten years there was always a mania for producing verse in imitation of his manner; and printing it with his name. Every year or two something of the sort would go the rounds of our multitudinous press.

Tennyson said of his own imitators!

> "And some are pretty enough,
> And some are poor indeed."

All of them, I must confess, when fairly run to earth, proved to be spurious—in fact were so to the *fine* ear and eye, judged by internal evidence alone.

One of the last (and best) was "Leonanie," and I am not surprised that it appealed to you so strongly at first sight. I chanced to see your paper in the *Fortnightly*, and observed that your version of the lyric was not quite right, which was not strange in *a copy from a copy*. I will answer your questions by saying:

1. I have no belief, not the slightest, that "Leonanie" is the work of Poe. He never permitted a stanza of his own to remain unutilized. He rewrote his *early* things over and over again, and as often republished them. There are certain tones and turns in "Leonanie," "fetching" as it is, which he never would have produced in his mature period.

2. Mr. Riley, *at his best*, is a very genuine (*genre*) balladist and poet. As he is popular with the "plain people," and can sell verse at high prices to the papers and magazines which they read, he has produced a flood of rhymes that do no good to his fame, and which have been unfortunately (I think) collected in the many-volumed edition of his writings made for sale. But *at his best*, he is possessed of feeling, lyrical art, and a musical ear.

3. Riley was, at first, a happy-go-lucky Jack-of-all-trades, like

many young fellows in the newer states. He was very likely to have turned off such a lyric, without the sense of responsibility that would now restrain him from attributing it to Poe.

4. There was something reprehensible in the proceedings which brought "Leonanie" to my attention,—I think in the early 90's,—and which led me to give an opinion as to its genuineness. *Somebody* undertook to "raise the wind" by its sale to Mr. Foote—then a Wall Street banker, and our best collector of choice and rare literary books, etc. Mr. Foote brought the ——— to me, for an opinion, with the poem on the fly-leaf—as stated in the enclosed newspaper account, and I am compelled to say that I tested the penmanship rigidly, by letters and MSS. of Poe in my possession, and found that it was merely a plausible imitation. I therefore deduce,

5. That if "Leonanie" was originally written as a hoax, and for diversion, there was ultimately a decided effort to get a handsome sum of money by palming it off upon the market for rare books and manuscripts.

I think you will see by the poems "Ike Walton's Prayer" and "Mehala Ashcraft," that Mr. Riley has at his best, as I say, both feeling and melody of a high order. In my opinion he could have written "Leonanie," at that impressible stage of his growth, when the ear so readily catches the mannerisms of a master. And from my knowledge of his character, I certainly would take his word for it.

This letter is not "private," except that I do not wish excerpts made apart from the other statements and opinions that counterbalance them.

To Michael Monahan.

March 30, 1905.

I had it on my mind to drop you a line—even before your kindly note in late January, concerning, "Benigna Vena," as to which you gave me my money's worth—and to say a word about your discourse of Poe in the November number. But I have been through—well, what haven't I had "to do, to be, and to suffer?" Yet here at last, you see, with hundreds of unacknowledged books and letters, I am writing (the rarest of things in my case) a voluntary word of fellowship to you, for my own satisfaction.

Yes, I was much taken with your reflections and outgivings

upon the author of—let us say "The Haunted Palace," for a change from that eternal "Raven." This, because it has been the most unusual thing in my half-century of observation, to read a paper in which Poe was not blindly and ignorantly eulogized and "defended" (as if he needed defense or more fame!), or treated moralistically rather than as a *homo* and a poet. Your offhand talk shows you one of the few to look at him sanely yet with human feeling. I reckon that E. A. P. was first of all a *man*—like Burns and Shelley —like you and me and the rest. "Godsbodikins! use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?"

There were and are some hard lines in the life and fame of Poe, but who wouldn't have a hundred times as many to end up with his world-wide acceptation and his unforgettable renown!

By a mere blunder he did not get his niche, five years ago, in the self-constituted "House of Fame," but he'll take it this year or somebody's fur will fly!

Even Griswold made a notable literary executor for Poe. The worst enemies his fame has had, *me judice*, have been the nincompoops, the melodramatic, half-baked scribblers of either sex who have always tried to bring themselves into notice by accusing the world of being leagued against his genius and memory. Just such underlings have clung upon the heels of Shelley and Byron and Whitman and of other exceptional men whose career and genius were heroically picturesque.

But this is my fourth page (it being a luxury to write of one's own accord), and I have not yet said that I write with careless freedom, as one penman to another; not for publication, since I am so remorseful over my unfulfilled *contracts* that I dread to see my name in print; but this letter is merely a convoy to a couple of books which I venture to ask you to accept as a mark of appreciation of your work, and of your giving me credit for the little I have been able to do of my own.

The "Poets of America" contains a revision of a rather full article of mine on Poe, which was written for *Scribner's Monthly* (now the *Century*) years ago, and then published as a little vellum booklet. From your paper I gather that you may have never seen this chapter, and I would like to say that I think it was the first essay in a standard magazine in which Poe's art and genius and temperament were treated at length, with a wish to be highly critical yet sympathetic; also, that I wrote it with a

free heart, and, as a matter of fact, did bring "great love to my task."

Poe died in 1849, the night before my sixteenth birthday, when I was a very young freshman at Yale. Within two years Griswold brought out, and I eagerly read, the first two volumes of the collective edition of his "Tales and Poems." If I hadn't gone so wild over them, and over my other poets, etc., I perhaps would have been less dissipated, and have studied my *curriculum*, and not have had to leave college at the end of my sophomore year. I certainly was not banished for sobriety, and I early learned what flashes come to a fevered roysterer when he wakes with a dry mouth in the small hours, after an evening's high jinks. But I suppose Yale justly looks upon me now as a "sober man," or she shouldn't have made me one of her grandees.

In time I grew to measure Poe more judicially and ceased to imitate his style or methods, but I never ceased to deem him one of our exceptional men of genius. They say that what one desires greatly in youth, he has in age. (That means when it is too late to reward him?) At any rate, Fourier's apothegm is a great one, "Attractions are proportional to destinies," and so I lived to edit a definitive edition of Poe's writings. You seem to have seen Vol. i. If so, you must have noted that if either editor had small love for his task, it was not the essayist but the—biographer.

My essay on the "Tales" should be read in conjunction with the essays on the "Criticisms," Vol. vi., and on the "Poems," Vol. x. Taken together, they are as good work, for all their shortcomings, as I can do—, and, of course, more mature and sustained than the Chapter in "Poets of America."

Kindly accept the little volume of my later poems, as "First Collected." Troubles and duties have prevented me from consecutive poetic work. I consider my literary life very incomplete, since all I was fully prepared to do has not been done, and now never can be done. As Stoddard said:

> "Not what we would, but what we can
> Makes up the sum of living."

Don't lay this long screed up against me or think I shall repeat it, for I am surprised to find how I have been led along—having once yielded to the whim to write you.

From the Introduction to the "Tales":

The romancer, then, figures as the progenitor of our crypto-analytic fiction. As a poetic tale-writer, whose mind was haunted by artistic dreams, but who flourished in a country where constructive beauty was yet to come, he still excites a more than common interest; although his computable influence is not proportioned to the taking-up of his name, the idealization of his traits and career, in more lands than one. His romances, in truth, were a bright and burning row of cressets set up at the terminus, rather than at the beginning, of a literary era. If there was any impulse to copy them, it was disobeyed under the stress of that incoming naturalism which relegated their phase to an artificial past. Since their author's time, the "short story" has been engrafted upon Anglo-Saxon literature, but scarcely in consequence of his examples; it is not Poe's short story, not that of the French and cognate schools, —though our writers gain more than Poe's equipment, from the modern blending of all cults and methods. The short story of England and America is specifically English or American, except as written by the few who are enamoured of the French mode, and who have the desire and the grace to rival it.

What remains, and may be of higher value, is the indirect effect, upon our present literature, of Poe's theory and career. He started a revolt against "the didactic" and was our national propagandist of the now hackneyed formula, Art for Art's Sake, and of the creed that in perfect beauty consists the fullest truth. The question of his influence in this wise, upon later enthusiasts, would lead us forthwith into the by-ways of personal confession, of individual experience and result.

The winnow of time, no less, has set apart the writings of Poe from almost the entire yield of those American contemporaries whose lives were not prolonged far beyond his own. These Tales, which now have been examined with the respect due to works that have taken rank in literary annals, were written by an ill-paid journalist, at a time when his own country depended on foreign spoliation for its imaginative reading. When they show him at his worst, his exigencies justly may be borne in mind; if his style seems often formless and disjointed, it must be remembered that he wrote before the days of Arnold and Pater, of Flaubert, Daudet, and Maupassant. He has left us something of his best; and, when all is said, there are few more beautiful harmonies of thought and

sound and color than those presented in "Shadow," "Silence," and "Eleonora," or in "The Masque of the Red Death;" nor is there any such a trilogy, in our own literature, of prose romances taking wings of poetry at their will, as "Ligeia," "The Assignation," and "The Fall of the House of Usher." Through all of these, moreover, there is an impression of some dramatic energy in reserve, which, had it not seemed otherwise to the fates, might have enabled this Numpholeptos to escape from out his "pallid limit" of the moonbeam,—even to

> "pass that goal,
> Gain love's birth at the limit's happier verge,
> And, where an iridescence lurks, but urge
> The hesitating pallor on to prime
> Of dawn."

From the Introduction to the "Literary Criticism":

In fact, Poe was a natural critic, and equally a controversialist. His temperament inclined him to the minute analysis of defects; but he could be enthusiastic, and would go to an impulsive extreme in praise of a work or author that pleased him. Usually his literary views were sound, derived from his own perception, and from sympathetic reading of Coleridge—than whom no better master; but his equipment, as we have seen, was inclusive rather than thorough, and made up of what he had absorbed by the way. He had the judicial mind, but rarely was in the judicial state of mind. It was for this reason that his judgments were so extravagant in either direction. To be sure, he dealt for the most part with small subjects, and when he had a large one, he seldom had leisure for treating it in a large and adequate way. The latter disability he felt and regretted, as we see from a remark near the close of the review of "Barnaby Rudge."

Poe's critical excursions are of two kinds, abstract and specific. . . . The traits of even the minor writers of such a period have an evolutionary if not an intrinsic significance. Thus the critical writings, however fragmentary and uneven, of a persistent literary journalist, the most nervous and free-spoken of our early reviewers, are important from the scientific point of view. It is well that they have been collected, and their value will increase rather than diminish; for the beginnings of American culture will

be reckoned as equal in effect to those of any civilization whatsoever, and of as much import in letters and art as in political economics. One may assert that to the student of our native literature, and to the young American writer who would realize the conditions of the "rude forefathers" of his guild, an acquaintance with the following essays and sketches is little short of indispensable.

From the Introduction to the "Poems":

Little more need here be said of this child of the early century, who gained and long will hold a niche in the world's Valhalla—not for a many-sided inspiration, since his song is at the opposite extreme from that of those universal poets the greatest of whom has received the epithet of myriad-minded—but as one who gazed so intently at a single point that he became self-hypnotized, and rehearsed most musically the visions of his trance; not through human sympathy or dramatic scope and truth, but through his individuality tempered by the artistic nature which seizes upon one's own grief or exultation for creative use; most of all, perhaps, as one whose prophetic invention anticipated the future, and throve before its time and in a country foreign to its needs—as if a passion-flower should come to growth in some northern forest and at a season when blight is in the air. His music surely was evoked from "unusual strings." He was not made of stuff to please, nor cared to please, the didactic moralists, since he held that truth and beauty are one, and that beauty is the best antidote to vice—a word synonymous, in his belief, with deformity and ugliness. His song "was made to be sung by night," yet was the true expression of himself and his world. That world he located out of space, out of time, but his poems are the meteors that traverse it. So far as it was earthly, it was closed about, and barred against the common world, like the walled retreat of Prince Prospero in "The Masque of the Red Death;" and in the same wise his poems become the hourly utterance of that clock of ebony, the chimes from which constrained the revellers to pause in their dancing with strange disconcert, and with portents of they knew not what. His prose at times was poetry, and for the rest its Muse seldom gave place to the sister Muse of Song. The prose of poets is traditionally genuine, yet, in our day at least, the greater poets have for the most part written verse chiefly, if not alone. If more of Poe's

imaginative work had been cast in metrical form, it might have proved more various and at spells even rapturous and glad. And if the sunshine of his life had been indeed even the shadow of the perfect bliss which he conceived to be the heavenly minstrel's, he would have had a more indubitable warrant for his noble vaunt, that Israfel himself earth-fettered,

> "Might not sing so wildly well
> A mortal melody."

In London, March 2, 1909, at The Poe Centenary, Stedman's old comrade, Whitelaw Reid, paid this tribute: "Finally let us never forget his hard fate in his own choice of a literary executor and biographer. Not till this generation did he get bare justice at home—and then best perhaps in the definitive edition of his works and biography issued a few years ago by two associates, Professor Woodberry, of Columbia, and the prominent and lately mourned man of letters whom New Yorkers loved to call our banker poet, but who must always live in memory with some of us as among the cheeriest of comrades, and the most chivalric of friends, dear, gallant, debonair Ned Stedman."

CHAPTER XXVI

AN AMERICAN ANTHOLOGY

Prelude

I saw the constellated matin choir
Then when they sang together in the dawn,—
The morning stars of this first rounded day
Hesperian, hundred-houred, that ending leaves
Youth's fillet still upon the New World's brow;
Then when they sang together,—sang for joy
Of mount and wood and cataract, and stretch
Of keen-aired vasty reaches happy-homed,—
I heard the stately hymning, saw their light
Resolve in flame that evil long inwrought
With what was else the goodliest demain
Of freedom warded by the ancient sea;
So sang they, rose they, to meridian,
And westering down the firmament led on
Cluster and train of younger celebrants
That beaconed as they might, by adverse skies
Shrouded, but stayed not nor discomfited,—
Of whom how many, and how dear, alas,
The voices stilled mid-orbit, stars eclipsed
Long ere the hour of setting; yet in turn
Others oncoming shine, nor fail to chant
New anthems, yet not alien, for the time
Goes not out darkling nor of music mute
To the next age,—that quickened now awaits
Their heralding, their more impassioned song.

E. C. S.

To George W. Smalley.

February 16, 1901.

My dear old George,—(which is, I think, what Pendennis used to call Mr. Warrington). You will find a script of the "Prelude," and may care to place it opposite the text on Page 2. I send

it that a touch of your lifelong and admiring colleague may go with the books; again, because I piously believe, as Gil Blas says with regard to the legitimacy of his children, that 'tis a fairish bit of that rarest, easiest, most difficult of all things—continuous blank-verse. At all events, I recast it more than once before it suited me. . . .

In the Introduction to "An American Anthology," Mr. Stedman explains:

The reader will comprehend at once that this book was not designed as a Treasury of imperishable American poems. To make a rigidly eclectic volume would be a diversion, and sometimes I have thought to spend a few evenings in obtaining two thirds of it from pieces named in the critical essays to which the present exhibit is supplementary. In fact, more than one projector of a handbook upon the lines of Palgrave's little classic has adopted the plan suggested, and has paid a like compliment to the texts revised by the editors of "A Library of American Literature."

But no "Treasury," however well conceived, would forestall the purpose of this compilation. It has been made, as indicated upon the title-page, in illustration of my review of the poets and poetry of our own land. It was undertaken after frequent suggestions from readers of "Poets of America," and bears to that volume the relation borne by "A Victorian Anthology" to "Victorian Poets." The companion anthologies, British and American, are meant to contain the choicest and most typical examples of the poetry of the English tongue during the years which they cover. The effective rise of American poetry was coincident with that of the Anglo-Victorian. It has been easy to show a preliminary movement, by fairly representing the modicum of verse, that has more than a traditional value, earlier than Bryant's and not antedating the Republic. Again, as the foreign volume was enlarged by the inclusion of work produced since the "Jubilee Year," so this one extends beyond the course surveyed in 1885, and to the present time. This should make it, in a sense, the breviary of our national poetic legacies from the nineteenth century to the twentieth. Now that it is finished, it seems, to the compiler at least, to afford a view of the successive lyrical motives and results of our first hundred years of song, from which the critic or historian may derive conclusions and possibly extend his lines into the future.

When entering upon my task, I cheerfully assumed that it would be less difficult than the one preceding it; for I had traversed much of this home-field in prose essays, and once again,—aided by the fine judgment of a colleague,—while examining the whole range of American literature before 1890. Many poets, however, then not essential to our purpose, are quoted here. More space has been available in a work devoted to verse alone. Other things being equal, I naturally have endeavored, though repeating lyrics established by beauty or association, to make fresh selections. While verse of late has decreased its vogue as compared with that of imaginative prose, yet never has so much of it, good and bad, been issued here as within the present decade; never before were there so many rhythmical aspirants whose volumes have found publishers willing to bring them out attractively, and never have these tasteful ventures had more assurance of a certain, if limited, distribution. The time required for some acquaintance with them has not seemed to me misspent; yet the work of selection was slight compared with that of obtaining privileges from authors and book-houses, insuring correctness of texts and biographical data, and mastering the countless other details of this presentation. My forbearing publishers have derived little comfort from its successive postponements in consequence of these exigencies and of the editor's ill health. The delay, however, has rounded up more evenly my criticism and illustration of English poetry, carrying to the century's end this last volume of a series so long ago projected.

And further:

What then constitutes the significance of a body of rhythmical literature as found in either of these anthologies, each restricted to its own territory, and both cast in the same epoch and language? Undoubtedly, and first of all, the essential quality of its material as poetry; next to this, its quality as an expression and interpretation of the time itself. . . . Our own poetry excels as a recognizable voice in utterance of the emotions of a people. The storm and stress of youth have been upon us, and the nation has not lacked its lyric cry; meanwhile the typical sentiments of piety, domesticity, freedom, have made our less impassioned verse at least sincere. One who underrates the significance of our literature, prose or verse, as both the expression and the stimulant of

national feeling, as of import in the past and to the future of America, and therefore of the world, is deficient in that critical insight which can judge even of its own day unwarped by personal taste or deference to public impression. He shuts his eyes to the fact that at times, notably throughout the years resulting in the Civil War, this literature has been a "force."

. . . . . .

In offering this final volume of a series that has diverted me from projects more in the humor of the hour, I feel a touch of that depression which follows a long task, and almost ask whether it has been worth completion. Would not the labor have been better expended, for example, upon criticism of our prose fiction? The muse sits neglected, if not forspent, in the hemicycle of the arts:—

> "Dark Science broods in Fancy's hermitage,
> The rainbow fades,—and hushed they say is Song
> With those high bards who lingering charmed the age
> Ere one by one they joined the statued throng."

Yet after this verification of my early forecast, why should not the subsidiary prediction—that of poesy's return to dignity and favor—no less prove true? As it is, having gone too far to change for other roads, I followed the course whether lighted by the setting or the rising sun. Concerning the nature and survival of poetry much is said in view of the apparent condition. Song is conceded to be the language of youth, the voice of primitive races,—whence an inference that its service in the English tongue is near an end. But surely poetry is more than the analogue of even those folk-songs to which composers recur in aftertime and out of them frame masterpieces. Its function is continuous with the rhythm to which emotion, age after age, must resort for a supreme delivery,—the vibration that not only delights the soul of infancy, but quavers along the heights of reason and intelligence.

If the word "lost" can be applied to any one of the arts, it is to poetry last of all. Not so long ago it was linked with sculpture, now the crowning triumph of a world's exposition. We must be slow to claim for any century supereminence as the poetic age. Our own country, to return, has not been that of a primitive people, colonial or under the republic; and among all peoples once emerged from childhood modes of expression shift in use and

favor, and there are many rounds of youth, prime, and decadence. Spring comes and goes and comes again, while each season has its own invention or restoration. The new enlightenment must be taken above all into account. The world is too interwelded to afford many more examples of a decline like Spain's,—in whose case the comment that a nation of lute-players could never whip a nation of machinists was not a cynicism but a study in ethnology. Her lustration probably was essential to a new departure; while as for America, she has indeed her brawn and force, but is only entering upon her song, nor does a brood of minor poets imply that she has passed a climacteric. It will be long before our people need fear even the springtime enervation of their instinctive sense of beauty, now more in evidence with every year.

More likely they have not yet completed a single round, inasmuch as there has been thus far so little of the indubitably dramatic in our rhythmical production. The poetic drama more than once has marked a culmination of imaginative literature. Constructively, it is the highest form of poetry, because it includes all others metrical or recitative; psychologically, still the highest, going beyond the epic presentment of external life and action: not only rendering deeds, but setting bare the workings of the soul. I believe that, later than Shakespeare's day, the height of utterance in his mode and tongue is not of the past, but still to be attained by us. Thus poetry is indeed the spirit and voice of youth, but the thought of sages, and of every age. Our own will have its speech again, and as much more quickly than after former periods of disuse as the processes of action and reaction speed swiftlier than of old. To one bred to look before and after this talk of atrophy seems childish, when he bears in mind what lifeless stretches preceded the Miltonic and the Georgian outbursts. A pause, a rest, has been indicated, at this time especially innocuous and the safeguard against cloying; meantime our new-fledged genius has not been listless, but testing the wing in fields outside the lyric hedgerows. In the near future the world, and surely its alertest and most aspiring country, will not lack for poets. Whatsoever the prognosis, one thing is to be gained from a compilation of the songs of many: this or that singer may be humble, an everyday personage among his fellows, but in his verse we have that better part of nature which overtops the evil in us all, and by the potency of which a race looks forward that else would straggle to the rear.

In the Autumn of 1900, when this compilation, with its offering from the poetry of five hundred and seventy-one poets, appeared, the literary editor of the *Tribune* in a review, which especially pleased Mr. Stedman, said:

We cannot refrain from a momentary forgetfulness of everything save an emotion of exultant pride in our countrymen. . . . Like the "Victorian Anthology" it illustrates the work of a critical period in the literary life of a nation. Like that volume, again, it exhibits no purely personal choice of poems presented solely to be admired, but an essentially historical survey; one in which the editor's fine taste is deliberately placed at the service of an historical purpose. Unlike the earlier collections, finally, this brings the whole body of the National literary product of an epoch into a workable perspective for the first time. The mere concentration of all our poets in one place, as it were, must give the reader a clearer view of their significance and invite him to sum up his impressions. Quite as inevitably he balances them with the impressions received from the editor's book of Victorian verse, a work as authoritative as this one. . . . This book itself puts in the hands of the reader the means of making the proper deductions; it is a mine of instruction as well as of pleasure. It gives us some priceless touchstones of our own. The sparse handful of adverse criticisms which may be made leave it a model of what a poetical Anthology should be, and a monument to American Literature which we believe will hold undisputed a lasting position.

Early in his work upon this second Anthology, Mr. Stedman wrote to his publishers:

Thanks for the copy of your *Transcript*, with that extended advertisement (of my writings) so effectively composed and displayed. I was glad, too, to see it in the *Evening Post*, the same night when that paper's reviewer bunched my new volume with a score of other books, some very "minor," under notice. That was a snub, however, for which I forgive him, since he has not sent me yet (as thrice before in other years) a private letter telling me of his own high admiration, etc. He damned the "Victorian Anthology" for not including more from one poet—whose things had not then got into book form—and said *nothing* of its general design and proportions. The only reason, in his present notice, that he quotes

"Helen Keller" is that he knows the girl and that the poem is not relating to a boy. The *Post*, by the way, never printed any review of "The Nature and Elements of Poetry," though the New York editor paid handsome attention to the original lectures at Baltimore.

By the way, is not the "Victorian Anthology," in several respects, still about the best—i. e. most serviceable—*single-volume* gift-book in holiday-time and otherwise. I never have made a book to compare with it, in fullness and richness of contents, logical design, etc., and I believe it will hold its own in the fine solid shape you gave it. Then, too, everyone who has a copy will want "An American Anthology" to keep it company, so it is to our advantage to keep the V. A. in mind.

Though more pressed than ever, I have got the American volume well in hand, and hope soon to start your printers with copy. But it is costing me a small fortune to make it. Among other things, an extra secretary in the household, occupied with little else, while my other assistant attends to her usual duties of letter-writing, etc. It is very delicate and laborious work, and I would gladly give up the job—since the matters of rights, authors' feelings and wishes, etc., are appalling, and occupy ten times the time required for choosing and writing. For sometime I have been meaning to write you that I can't think of making any deduction from my modest 10% royalty, as an allowance for the copyrights of Longfellow, Harte, and a few others—of which, by the way, I believe you now hold the control. It was my original proposition, I know to do so, but I did not foresee the *great* labor and expense of my own work, and the time involved, for which I get nothing—as for original text—from the magazines; nothing induced me to attempt so thankless a job except the desire to make companion hand-books to the critical volumes.

Apart from the ordinary details devolving upon an editor, Mr. Stedman made for himself many more. It was not his rule to select a poem when the author had not published a volume, but whenever he saw, or knew of some one poem of distinctive quality, he would spare no effort to obtain a perusal of everything its author had written. We remember an instance where such a poem was especially fine, but did contain a faulty passage of several lines. Stedman, feeling

that nevertheless it deserved inclusion, helped the author to perfect it. Another time, he broke up plates to include part of William Vaughn Moody's "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," which was published after selections from his poems had been stereotyped. The very last verses in the collection were found the morning that he sent his last pages to the printer. His attention to fugitive verse was first evinced, when in 1873 he wrote "A Belt of Asteroids"—single-poem poets.

A little personal touch which may be of interest is that the judgment of the mature man was often the same as had been that of the boy. Many of the poems which then he clipped and pasted in a large scrapbook were used years later in "A Library of American Literature" and in his Anthologies.

When poets wrote asking why they were not represented in the Anthology, Stedman was worried, hurt, lest he had overlooked some poem which should have been included—lest he had not done justice to each and to all. Invariably, he would reëxamine their poems; but almost as invariably he found his original judgment correct.

Sometimes he was rather sternly reproved. To one such correspondent he replied:

> When one of my sins of omission is held up to me, and this is followed by a rebuke for some sin of commission,—and such is my two-fold experience almost every morning just now,—I feel like Lowell's "Zekle" who
>
> "—stood a spell on one foot fust,
> Then stood a spell on t'other,
> *And on which one he felt the wust*
> *He couldn't ha' told ye nuther!*"
>
> But why, O why! should you hurl Shakespeare's curse against me? For I assuredly have not "moved" your "bones." I have not dug "the dust inclosed" in your 1200 sonnets, 3 tragedies, 2 plays, 750 long ballads, 8000 lyrics, 5 volumes of love-poems,—my only offense is that I found it impossible to choose among so

many masterpieces, and feared to do their author injustice by representing him with undue brevity within the few pages at my disposal. Pray cherish kinder feelings in your heart toward your unworthy and very humble servant.

Many objected to the omission of John G. Saxe. Finally, Stedman wrote to his publishers:

I wish I *had* found some real poetry to represent him by. As a popular and clever writer, I, of course, did include him in "A Library of American Literature," but read him over and over again without obtaining one *real poem* for the Anthology. I know that in the latter collection there are humorous pieces no better than his, by more obscure writers; but I could not bring myself to represent him, a "personage" as he was, by a single hackneyed *jeu d'esprit*, and in despair left him out. Yet a critic has recently quoted one most poetic stanza from some poem I must have overlooked, and now *I* receive *dozens* of letters like the card herewith returned, and in truth don't know what to reply—without hurting the feelings of his already grieved kinfolk.

If you choose, you might say: "Mr. Stedman found it difficult to select a poem, or poems, that fairly expressed the wit, cleverness, and *bonhomie* that, in his own day, evidently justified Saxe's popularity as a lecturer and writer."

A letter which gave Stedman keen enjoyment was this one:

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO MR. STEDMAN'S AMERICAN ANTHOLOGY.

I turn the pages with delight;
  How black the ink! The type how large!
I find my name—for once spelled right!
  Nor note the somewhat scanty marge.
But O, my subsequent reflections!
  What clouds upon my spirit fall!
I'm classed "ADDITIONAL SELECTIONS"!
  And get no Gothic type at all!

Of course, in such a host, I know,
  One will be General, one a sutler;
One shines as Edgar Allan Poe,
  And one as WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER.

But when we blind and deaf and halt
  Are bid to banquet with our betters,
That *I* should sit below the salt,
  And have no robe of Gothic letters!!

In vain I weigh what Wordsworth wrote—
  The Preface prints the gentle rede:
That I should "utter my true note,"
  "Shine, in my place content."—Indeed!
Well, who the deuce is N. or M.?
  Who ever heard of X—— Y—— Z——?
Why should he **Early English** them,
  And set his ROMAN CAPS on me?

O Gardener kind! When next you stick us
  Poor poets in your Flower Show,
Have one bed in your Hortus Siccus
  And plant us equally a-row.
For O, how bitter my reflections!
  What clouds upon my spirit fall!
To be "ADDITIONAL SELECTIONS"!
  And have no Gothic type at all!

GEORGE MEASON WHICHER.

To which Stedman replied:

ON READING THE FOREGOING SONG OF DEGREES.

Let Gothic headlines serve the turn
  Of bards whom Time has bid to quit;
My choice, to pilfer from his urn
  The one rare thing in beauty writ.
See capelmeisters come and go,—
  Their scores lie hid in silent pages,
While haply some chance strain shall flow
  In haunting music down the ages.

The tomes our elders knew by rote,
  Calf bound, unoped, the alcoves fill,
Yet clear and high some perfect note,
  Once heard, our heart-strings echo still.

Bacchylides himself shall need
No prouder monuments erection,
Perennius aere, than the meed
Of one "additional selection."

E. C. S.

My dear Mr. Whicher, Your fetching rejoinder to my inclusion of you, with the exquisite lines on Bacchylides, as a single-poem poet, was the cleverest and brightest piece of bric-a-brac verse I had seen for many a day. It came, as it chanced, when I was laid up with fever, but then and there I vowed to send you a couple of stanzas as soon as I might get down again. So here they are, and withal so immeasurably below your own, that I exhibit the utmost self-abnegation in submitting them to you, or permitting the two *jeux d'esprit* to be seen together! Your share of them is quite too good to be lost, and I have no objection—" but the contrary,"—to having you print them, with or without my lame *riposte*. I warrant you the *Century* would like them for its "In Lighter Vein," at the end of the magazine, but you will have to be watchful as to the proof-reading. With remembrances to Lawton and much respect for your muse. . . .

In order, again, to view Stedman directly at work, we have chosen a few from a great number of letters. With the following printed form, he usually added a personal message:

"An American Anthology" is to complete a series of volumes concerned with the modern poetry of our English tongue. The book will be a counterpart, in form and method, of "A Victorian Anthology," published in 1895. The two works are meant to give a select and typical illustration of the poetry of Great Britain and America throughout the period reviewed in my critical volumes, "Poets of America" and "Victorian Poets."

The right to represent our older poets, and many of our own time, is already obtained. I ask your permission to use, for the purposes of this Anthology, a selection, or selections, from your own poetry, such as my space limits will include. It will facilitate my labor if you will kindly inform me whether your own assent will cover your publisher's also. Due acknowledgment, of course, will be made in the volume to all publishers granting the requisite privileges.

This will be my one collection of American poetry. An unavoidable portion of the detail involved is the subjection of writers to another request of the kind with which, it may be thought, we all have been sufficiently familiar.

To F. D. Sherman.

November 21, 1897.

Last night, before bedtime, I went all through your "Little-Folk Lyrics," in their beauteous new singing-robes, and not for the first time—I must tell you—mingled my pleasure with a trace of genuine envy. When you first composed and got together these fetching rhymes for and of Childland, you "went and did" just what I always longed to do, and meant to do, only I never could have done it "by Divine right" of Nature as you have. One has to be a poet *and* a young *pater*, and one in a thousand, besides. What a rare thing—to win both age (that's I) and Little Folkdom: above all, to know that one's song-book is to be the delight and memory of all that young world from which we grown-up folk are exiled! I can see that this edition of the "L. F. L." has entered there to stay.

I think, by the way, that some of them might well be among our selections for the "American Anthology," which book I now have taken in hand—the *last* of my compendium. Would like to make a choice of two or three, from "Blossoms," "Daisies," "King Bell," "In the Meadow," "The Four Winds," "The Shadows," "Snow Song," "Lullaby," "The Fairies Dance," "The Rose's Cup." These I mention more particularly as being both Little Folk Lyrics and suited to an Anthology of the kind under way. Would group them with small-cap titles under a cap-head generic? This would divide them in a sense from the selections from your other poetry, yet keep all your work together.

When we meet you can tell me what you think, there being no hurry, and I am not trying to draw out another nice letter from you!

This is a rather mixed-up epistle, but the fact is that the paragon of lovely and clever womanhood is here to-day, my old-time pet, Mrs. Henry Harland—on a flying trip to America for the first time in seven years. She is not a day older in looks, nor a bit spoiled by crowded experiences, but with some wondrous added

perfection of voice, motion, look, which the years have given her. I think you used to meet her at our house.

To R. W. Gilder.

November 20, 1898.

Your gift is most timely, for I am getting close upon your trail in the process of my latest and last Anthology.

With "In Palestine" and the other volumes that have appeared since I made up your pages for the "Library of American Literature," I feel perfectly equipped for undertaking your stained glass window in my American Valhalla. That is rather a big name for an edifice which I am forced to construct from new-world conglomerate. Howsoever, I shall do the best I can; and you know very good effects are now produced by our La Farges, Armstrongs and Tiffanys, in combining old junk bottles, broken looking-glass, and other culls from the dust-heap. When to these I can add the opalescence of verse like yours, perhaps I can make a tolerable showing.

To William Winter.

November 21, 1898.

My beloved Eulogist:—You seem to be about the only man to whom I write of my own will, but I would not entangle you in such a web of letters had you not consummated your purpose of building for me a monument *perennius aere*. Being a member of the Dunlap Society, I have promptly received its beautiful latest issue, the best in title, and at least equal to the best in contents, of the whole series of our publications. I have given you my thanks in advance for the dedication, and have told you how I feel about it; but let me now add that I could not have accepted so unstinted a tribute, however exquisitely phrased, from any other man than you—you, not always the *laudator temporis acti*, but always alert with the glow of comradeship,—of contemporaneous enthusiasm—you whose friendship is of itself an authoritative criticism, conferring upon the man whom you delight to honor the ribbon that he can wear for a lifetime.

I am delighted with the fine autotype which forms the frontispiece to the volume, and am going to obtain a proof of it for insertion in my extended volume of "Poets of America." In fact, I like it better than Champney's pastels, since he really has caught

the spirit of your face and bearing in his drawing and shading, and these are the things often obscured when blended with his coloring.

Well; I did not know that you were aware of my birthday until I received a greeting from you, among others, which reached me on that date of pathetic omen, the 8th of October.

I heard from Laurence Hutton also; and though I must be really getting old, since my colleagues begin to bear my birthdays in mind, yet I would not have either of these factors otherwise.

Now I want to refer again to your pages in our "American Anthology," having carefully preserved your suggestions of last spring, and having been sitting up with them and your poetry since I have written you. I wish to say at once that I really think you made the best selections possible for a group from which I am to take my own choice according to my needs and space. After all, a real artist is the best judge of his own work, especially if his labors have involved the exercise of both the creative and the critical faculties. I have always found it so, in spite of a vulgar tradition to the contrary.

I am making as good a showing as possible for our own generation, that began with the Civil War, and was so long overshadowed in the vision of the public by the renown of the great lingering poetic generation that went before us. All things considered, I think we Agamemnons, in spite of the heroes before us, and bearing in mind the *post-bellum* adverse conditions, did far more than is fairly understood.

I have selected nine of your poems, and will name them to you, hoping that you will approve my choice of them. To begin with, I must insert [1] *Bromley*, the latest, and as I really believe, the most condensed and distinctive of your metrical characterizations. It is full of emotion, analysis and tributary imagination. Setting aside my interest in the man we both knew and loved, it is my critical opinion that "I. H. B." is one of the strongest and finest things you have ever put in verse. Yes; it must go into the "Anthology," and no man of your years could ask for more satisfactory praise than to have it said that his last production is his best.

Next to this I like your tribute to poor Adelaide Neilson, with its remarkably spontaneous opening. There never was a truer apothegm, trite as it is, than that feeling ennobles art.

[1] "I. H. B."

Working backwards, I wish of course to represent the poems for occasional delivery of which you are the acknowledged master. These are usually long, so that I can use but one of them. Each has its special quality, but all in all I can do the best with "Edwin Booth," and have been glad to see that that one is on the list you gave me for consideration.

Still working backwards, I have chosen "Symbols," "Circe" and "Asleep." I have begun my selections, naturally, with "My Queen." It always seemed to me remarkable that in your youth you should have struck out at once that pure old English note. For another piece of the same kind, I myself prefer "Relics" to "Homage," although the latter is the one upon your list. It seems to me there is nothing in the former so good as the stanza "He grandly loves who loves in vain."

Finally, I have selected the little "Unwritten Poems," which closes my series of your pieces, and I will now repeat these in their new order:

1. My Queen.
2. Asleep.
3. Relics.
4. Circe.
5. Symbols.
6. Edwin Booth.
7. Adelaide Neilson.
8. Bromley.
9. Unwritten Poems.

All together these occupy the space of three hundred and sixty-five lines, giving you one for each day in the year. The copy will not go forward for the next fortnight at least, so pray tell me what you think of this arrangement, and if you think of any change that would be a decided amendment.

If the text of your latest editions is satisfactory, I will guarantee you absolutely correct proof-reading; for I mean to have this Anthology deserve the prefix to the Koran: There is no error in this book.

On many accounts I am strongly tempted to substitute the holy and beautiful poem "Arthur" for that to Edwin Booth. It is not only more elevated but more poetic, and in it you have wreaked both your thoughts and your feelings upon expression. But there were reasons, largely due to your association with Edwin,

which affected my decision. Still I wish to say that I leave the choice between the two entirely to you, and shall be only too glad in this instance to gratify the inmost heart of my lifelong fellow-poet and comrade in both joy and grief. I wish that my limits would enable me to make use of both these pieces, but I have a hundred years to cover in a single volume, and poets of the last decade tread violently upon one another's heels. They rush down upon me like the shades on Charon, and I wish that most of them were drowned in the Styx.

Do you know, I had quite forgotten that you had a degree of Doctor of Letters from Brown, as I had it in my mind to secure you for the honorary alumni roll of Yale. Howells and Aldrich are both there, but only as Masters of Arts. Judge Howland and I both wished to give you some proof of the estimate in which you are held by Yalensians, and may yet be able to do so; but our original purpose is temporarily frustrated by the dignities which you already hold.

If my gifted amanuensis were not already drooping like a flower far in the night, I would say a lot more, about the Homeric laughter to which we have been moved by your delightful setting forth of Hall Caine and other puff-balls, and of my interest in your immediate *Tribune* work, such as the review of Portia this morning, etc. But this is already the longest letter I have dictated since my illness.

Good-night and God bless you!

There was an interchange of letters, and then Mr. Winter wrote:

December 5, 1898.

My Dear old Comrade!—I should be content with *any* selection of my verses that you might be pleased to make, for I have more confidence in your judgment than I have in my own. I am much pleased with the selection upon which you have finally settled, and I could not make any suggestion upon its improvement.—You have taken great trouble about the matter, and I very deeply appreciate your affectionate interest and your desire to show me at my best; and I think you have most thoroughly accomplished your kind and generous purpose.—I have never looked upon myself as a great "success" in Poetry: I think that it was "in me," once, to do something out of the common course; but,

in the time of my strength I thought more of Living than of writing about it, and the trend of fortune and circumstance has been toward making me a cynical satirist—which is about all that is left.—There is, I suppose, a certain *style* about some of my verses—but it is all pure accident: the only writer that ever might [have] influenced me is Shakespeare; and latterly I have felt the influence of Wordsworth. But all the old boys are splendid, and I can enjoy Crabbe and Byron, Coleridge and Moore, Southey and Prior,—in fact every school and every phase: my particular joys being: Gray's "Elegy" and Wordsworth's "Immortality"—which have never, so far as I know, been surpassed, if ever equalled. *Everything of mine* looks painfully small alongside of these. God bless you and may your Christmas season be free from sorrow.

To Edwin Markham.

January 28, 1899.

Pray take my hearty thanks in exchange for "The Man with the Hoe." The poem will lead off your columns in my "Anthology"; it is precisely what I need to tone up your other verse; very much as vintners put a gallon of brandy into a cask of Spanish wine. I think with the Sunday editor that it has certain lasting qualities. At all events it is the most distinctive thing you have yet written; and knowing something of the heart of socialism, I realize that a large body of constituents will rise to it.

Now for a purely technical remark: the poem is strong enough to carry any method of verse. You have used, very properly, the greatest and strongest form among English measures. But I have more than once written that there are not ten persons living who are masters of blank verse; and have also written that to write it is like standing naked. Anyone can do that, but not one in a thousand would suit a Pheidias. Blank verse should not depend merely upon its five feet to a line, but even more upon its cæsuras. I observe, that with few exceptions, you have no breaks and pauses in the middle of your lines, and that only a few lines run over into the lines succeeding them respectively. Your poem, then, is written in a novel, and I may say staccato sort of unrhymed pentameter. It is a series of emphatic lines involving questions or statements each of which might almost be isolated. That in spite of this the poem is powerfully impressive is of itself an evidence of

its importance as poetry, with respect to two of poetry's indispensable factors, namely, emotion and thought.

I do not wonder that you are in doubt as to which of the three substitutions for line 6 (stanza II) should be made. To begin with, the line as it is seems good and imaginative. In fact, I like it better, both as imagination founded on things as they seem, and imagination related scientifically to things as they are, than either the first or the third of your new lines. The second of the three, however, is true and imaginative, to wit:

"Stretched their spaces on the ancient deep"

But the *ancient deep* somehow has a trite sound, has it not?—and I shall not change the second stanza at all, unless you write me that you have decided to do so. But I approve in every way of transferring the 7th line of the fourth stanza to the place of the fifth line, and will do so in accordance with your suggestion.

I am very busy and none too strong, and do not often write a letter about the details of a poem, but am glad to be able to dictate this in person, and send you my warm appreciation.

The only expression I *don't* like in the whole poem is the compound word "soul-quenched"—that is the right idea, of course, but involves an image that is not precisely the thing, and smacks too much of the old-style reformer's cant—since even the best movements have their cant. It seems almost a blemish in your very noble poem. What do you think of "distraught"?—

"This monstrous thing disturbed and distraught"?

The word does not mean precisely what "soul-quenched" does but it does imply that the soul as well as the body has undergone its own form of distortion. The alliterative you may or may not like. If you hadn't honored me by requesting my opinion on the other forms, I would not take the liberty of objecting to "soul-quenched."

To the Same.

February 13, 1899.

I received your letter of February 5th which, by the way, is very exquisitely inscribed upon paper most luxurious for a re-

former and socialist. Having only a moment to-day, and not much strength, I will be brief in the rejoinder.

First, let me congratulate you upon the public appreciation of "The Man with the Hoe," and of what is better, the pother stirred up by it. Controversy is life and flame; stagnation is death and obscurity.

Next, I naturally think your Mr. Ambrose Bierce, who seems to be in some respects the Poe of the Pacific slope, is a sound critic of poetry; for the exact resemblance between his technical comment and mine even to the use of the very words and phrases is almost startling; or would be, if both he and I were not right. Mind you, I am not putting technical comment above the power and value of your unique poem; which I may say is perhaps the more impressive for having a technique of its own. This, in fact, I indicated in speaking of your staccato method.

I fail to see why you should call Bierce's work "deadly." Never in my life have I had so precise distinction in prophecy awarded me by any critic, friend or foe, as he awards to you. I shall think your head is turned, and that you take yourself too seriously, if you do not estimate this at its immense worth, and be more than satisfied.

Speaking of Bierce, will you not kindly write me at once, and tell me in what year he was born, as I do not know his chronological place in my "Anthology." In short, kindly get for me answers to the questions on the slip in the enclosed envelope, with as little trouble to yourself as possible.

I have read with interest Dr. Taylor's scholia. He makes a point, but if you expect the public or the sagacious critic to realize that "The Man with the Hoe" is not intended for a blank verse poem, you must accompany the piece by a portrait of yourself, pointing toward the measure and saying "This is not intended for blank verse."

As to the motive of the poem—the philosophy, since the question has been raised, I will say what I did not say before; you know that I am a socialist—an evolutionary socialist. I believe in evening up and not in evening down, and am yearly more convinced that is the law of the universe. The man with the hoe seems to me a being on his way up, certainly far advanced beyond the tree-dwellers and troglodytes who doubtless were his, your, and my ancestors. If at present he is almost "a brother to the sluggish

clod which the rude swain turns with his share and treads upon," it is no sign his children will be. Probably he is not in so bad condition as his grandfather was before the French Revolution. All this has nothing to do with the force, passion, and in some respects grandeur of your poem. Art is a means of expression—of individual expression, and the greatest thing an artist can do is to convey strongly a sense of the way in which *he* sees a thing, the force of the impression made upon him. In fact, the impressional school avow that that is the only thing worth doing.

Finally, your "Semiramis," or a "Look into the Gulf" is one of your manuscript poems which I had copied with various others, when they were here. I was intending to use it as a specimen of your most imaginative work—in fact, to lead off with, before receiving "The Man with the Hoe." Meantime, I cannot myself associate bugles with Semiramis and Nineveh. Horns and trumpets seems to me more germane to the mêtier of the poem. However, that is your affair and not mine. The pieces which are at present arranged for your representation are serially:

The Man with the Hoe.
My Comrade.
Poetry.
The Butterfly.
The Last Furrow.
The Whirlwind Road.

at the end, Joy of the Morning.

If you would prefer "Semiramis" to "The Whirlwind Road," I will substitute it with pleasure. In "The Butterfly" you have a line:

"But wafted gently to the leafy land."

I suppose it means that *me* is understood after *wafted*. Does the line wholly suit you?

There, my budget is ended; crowded by a thousand duties and labors, and with an immense correspondence, I have been unable to write any other author as minutely about his work as I have written you; but we have various motives in common, and became friends when you visited me.

You will comprehend then, when I ask you to frame your reply with the idea that I shall not be able to write anymore at present, but you will believe me faithfully yours.

To Wilbur Larremore.

March 12, 1899.

I did not know that you had become a fellow Centurion. I am very glad of it and hope erelong to be able to resume my visits to the dear old ark, and learn to know you personally. Meanwhile, I naturally have seen something of your progress as a writer, and I have intended to ask permission to include something of yours in my "Anthology"; for I have seen one or two of your latter-day lyrics that are very taking. I suppose you realize that the design of my collection reserves narrow space for poets of this decade. The twentieth century anthologist must attend to them, and they can well afford to wait for him.

"Blossom Time" seems to me altogether lovely, and I like "An Epitaph," and also "In Printing-House Square." "Madam Hickory" I read when it appeared in "The Bachelor of Arts," and was instantly struck by your clever choice of a subject. You will not scold me, though, for saying that I wondered how you could permit so bright a lyric to go out without having perfected it. It would have been a real "hit" if you had overcome such rhymes as "manners—Diana's," and "dishonor—Madonna." It seems to me that a bit of what we call elegant or society verse should be absolutely flawless, or have no excuse for being. "Madam Hickory" is too good a thing to lose, and I hope you will yet make it just what it should be.

To Martha Gilbert Dickinson.

April 16, 1899.

You came like one of the trimmest of Ships that Pass in the Day, and you sped away like a "Flying Island of the Night." But we got acquainted, and are friends, and I am glad of it and shall be proud of my lyrical clanswoman and New Englandress.

Yes, of course, I wish and purpose to know everything in your book, and *réviser* my make-up with its aid, before sending to the printer; and there is time enough, for your generation is, I regret to say, several decades younger than that to which your Aunt, and your present Anthologist, and the Polyphême of the Luxembourg Garden, alike belong in the thoughts of the young newcomers.—Yes, Youth has no pity,—and 'tis a good thing it don't know its own charm.—I shall also pay much regard to the hints

you give me of your own preferences—one likes a clew to a poet's secret treasure-room.

The Park has turned green since you were here, possibly with envy, but I wish you could see it. I have bid the Spring to speed to Amherst.

To Henry A. Beers.

July 28, 1899.

You see that I am beginning to take notice like a one-year widow, or I wouldn't be acknowledging even by dictation your note of the 16th, for which my cordial thanks. As to my *malaise*, the only thing in which I have succeeded this year is in keeping it out of the newspapers. So it is no fault of yours that you have not known the woes of Cardiac Row, Bronxville.

Well, though still on my back I am doing a little editing, with the aid of my assistant-editor Miss Ella M. Boult, a Cornell Alumna, if you please. By the enclosed transcript of your schedule (which I wish I could use in full) you will see what it is to be a female bachelor of Arts; at least this is the way she disports when I am slow in making up my mind as to selections. As you are a sport yourself I enclose you this play-bill, against her protest, forcing her to make a copy for my own use so this need not be returned.

. . . I have been re-reading all of your verse from "Odds and Ends" down. You have had the real touch in both grave and gay and (strictly sub-rosa) if you had had the Harvard environment twenty-five years ago, instead of the Yale, you would have been stimulated to go far ahead of all those little tin-gods; and in fact would now be ranking with the Lowell cast. Well, well, both you and I have lived somewhat out of time, and a little out of place,—but you are still a young fellow of fifty. When you get to be sixty-five you will know it, if you don't now, and will look back and say "Oh, If I could only start again at fifty." To resume: Here is a schedule representing you on both sides; unfortunately it makes 276 lines and must be cut down to the neighborhood of 215 or 220; which by the way is a liberal relative proportion in my book that covers the nineteenth century. Like the Russian father I can't decide which of your children to throw to the wolves, and must ask you to do so for me. In the "L. A. L."—we had "Bumble-Bee," "Latimer" and the Mellen sonnet; any one of those

might be spared, and perhaps you will say Mme. Gumot to boot. For me I don't know why you left "Shades" out of the "Thankless Muse," for it is as good as not a few of Thackeray's *breviora*. As to the Grand Manan thing, it is thoroughly anthological up to the close of the seventh stanza, and you will observe that it has a very good ending at just that spot. I want a few elegantiæ in my collection and there are precious few just right in American verse. But I cannot use the whole of that ballad which is a structure too extended for its own strength. If you have it in your heart to lop off its extremity I would like very much to retain it and dismiss "Shades" and "Hugh Latimer," though the martyr stanzas have always seemed to me exquisitely attuned to their period. Or, you can leave out "Posthumous," if you elect, but that poem is a strong leader and goes to the heart of us men.

There, my dear fellow, . . . after all it is the breathing time of the year with you, and I am garrulous to-day, and feeling that we perhaps have not seen enough of each other, and feeling also warm of heart toward the few men of letters who have had to hold the fort at Yale. It now looks as though reinforcements were coming. Oh! one thing more—I am taken by your poem "On a Miniature," and knowing that your name is "Augustin," am moved to ask if your Mother was a child of France?

To Maurice Thompson.

July 30, 1899.

I have always thought we would meet—have always hoped we would meet, yet am still a "prisoner of hope." Unable to see you in the West but with the long-shoreman's complacent assurance that everyone must come to the sea-board, and with the belief that you would not do so without beating me up, I have long expected to see you looking in, and if the photographs don't belie you, probably to mistake you for Sir Henry Irving.—Despite his acting, which I don't like, he is a scholar, gentleman and good fellow. But he don't know a fiftieth part as much about sport, soldiering, song or story, as you do; and there would be no such points in common between him and me, as would draw out your and my magnetism.

After how many years is it, that I write to you again? Meanwhile I have kept in touch with you through your comment and criticism, chiefly in the *Independent*. You have said many stout

and sane things which I often have felt it on my American conscience to try to say *myself;* but I have reached the age where it gives me equal content, and is so much easier for me to have you say them.

For some years I have been prostrate much of the time with neurasthenia. Of late it has attacked my heart, and since May I have had to lie flat. Am recovering sufficiently to try to finish the book to which my circular relates, but am compelled to write you by another's hand.

Well, I have your collective edition of 1892, and the Houghtons' leave to make selections from it; but of course would not avail myself of the usufruct in your case without consulting you personally. It is a relief to get a full breath of your fresh air, after the stale and close corridors, through which I toil, and I wish, if you assent, to represent you at some length. Would like to lead off with that exquisite lyric "An Early Bluebird," (*not* "The Bluebird" which was in the " Lib. Am. Lit.") and to include "Theocritus," "The Assault," "The Creole Slave-Song," etc. Of course I want one of your earlier poems; "The White Heron," also in the "Lib. Am. Lit.," is everywhere quoted, and doubtless is the paragon, but would you not prefer "The Fawn" or "Flight Shot"? How about a few stanzas from your noble "Lincoln" poem, which Herbert Stone gave me in vellum?

This book has nearly killed me; the detail involving three times the labor spent on "A Victorian Anthology," but I hope it will be a good American legacy from the XIXth to the XXth Century. If I live through it, there are a few Songs yet in my heart to write, but—no more editing!

Believe me, my dear Thompson, though I have never pressed your hand. . . .

To the Same.

August 14, 1899.

Father was deeply gratified by your kind letter. He asks me to say, with his affectionate regards, that "The Lion's Cub" goes in, *dogs and all.* He thinks it is an heroic thing, and rounds up the century in good style.

Father found, when he came to the final editing, that he *had* a copy of "The Lion's Cub," clipped from the *Tribune*, but he has procured the issue of the *Independent*, containing it. He

is sorry to trouble you again, but he notices that you referred to the poem as "The Lion's *Whelp*" in your letter, and he presumes that you had remembered that Mr. Stoddard has a poem and book with the title "The Lion's Cub." Now, if the poem is called "The Lion's Whelp," he ventures to ask whether, for variety's sake, the first line might read:

"The *cub* that nipped," etc.

To Julian Hawthorne.

August 5, 1899.

Not so d—d hospitable I wish you to understand. Please rub off that stigma from that mental image of me, evolved by your own inner consciousness years ago. Nor does hospitality have to be "boundless" to ask *you* [1] over the door-sill along with your "Were-Wolf." Not that I know you to set up as a poet, although I have long suspected that the poet in you, more or less hampered the novelist, but I happened on that "Were-Wolf" in the *Chap-Book* some years ago, and overcame my indolence sufficiently to store it up against a day of need. I am anything but hospitable as a critic or an editor with the platitudes of the big figure-heads in poetry, but I often find some one poem written by a man of brains, who doesn't belong to the perfesh, that comes up in our rule of admission to an Anthology because it can't be left out. By the way, that is the Golden Rule for a "Golden Treasury," which my Anthology is not going to be, although I may make up a "Golden Treasury" from it on some leisure evening.

The "Were-Wolf" has an apt, irregular and seemingly inevitable power that makes it necessary to my collection. Instead of being the occasional poem of a prose-writer, I would think it the successful effort of a life-long verse-writer, who in the matter of art had learned to unlearn. I suppose it is not a translation or paraphrase, and wonder what put it into your head. You really ought to have written "Dracula" years ago, and not have let Stoker get ahead of you. The infernal book haunted me nights during the early stages of my illness.

Please write me at once that I can use the "Were-Wolf," and remember that the novelist who is by blood and choice a romancer is a confessed poet.

[1] Vampires, so Bram Stoker tells me in that Masterpiece of Terror, "Dracula," can't cross one's threshold unless they are (invited). [E. C. S.]

Mignon, my granddaughter, and righthand man, says that you needn't think that I am well because I am swearing, for I have been a splendid swearer straight through; but we both acknowledge that the fact that I am dictating my own letters, etc., to a staff of three secretaries and editors, is a still better symptom, though the doctor keeps me flat on my back. . . .

To T. B. Aldrich.

August 12, 1899.

I write, chiefly, to show you the make-up of your pages in my "Anthology." On the enclosed plate-proof, albeit the "second revise," and after close readings, here and at Cambridge, I have still found a few errors. You will see that I have almost slavishly followed your final edition—for example: I have your punctuation of the first five lines of "Sargent's Portrait," understanding as a fellow-poet how ordinary rules *must* be slighted to preserve the flow of verse. I have also, after three efforts, forced Cambridge to spell "syrop" p. 379, as you have, and not by Worcester (the latter being our standard). I only mention these things to show how carefully I am editing your matter just as you, my nearest colleague, would edit mine. You may be sure that the process could not be applied to everyone without postponing the issue of this volume until the 20th Century. Meanwhile, there has been so much fresh piping of late, some of it, like that of Miss Peabody's, of a kind to be desired, that the delay caused by my various break-downs steadily enlarges the range of the book; then there are the personal equations, etc., which have made my work on this collection literally three-fold that expended on the English book, in spite of my experience gained through the "Lib. Am. Lit." This would be the last of these thankless jobs if I were to live a hundred years. As it is, I disappoint the Houghtons again this Fall, and myself still more. When things were at the worst I could stand it no longer, but sent Miss Boult to inform them of the condition—they acted splendidly. But as soon as I was out of danger the doctors permitted me, provided I would lie flat, to organize a staff of three and direct matters. For seven weeks we four have worked every day, of course retarding my recovery, but the task of permissions, publishers, books, copying, biographies, is so enormous that we shall be lucky if we can get through in December, for the Spring trade. But I have got where *I* can hope

to leave home, soon, for a few weeks of fresh air and no work, and also away from anybody I know. . . .

I hope you will like the choices and arrangements; the space is of the first dimension in our period, and deservedly so. You will notice the beginning and the ending, and my usual attempt to make a little sonata or symphony of the whole thing. I have included two of my early favorites, indispensables, near the outset; also, later along, "Sargent's Portrait" and "Thalia," to please myself; nearly all the rest are taken, I think, from the list of those poems which you wished me to consider. I have been careful to represent your blank-verse, and now—a confession: where you find "Thalia," p. 384, the first proofs contained "San Domingo," a very fine bit of verse and a perfect picture of the West Indies, *in petto*, as I, an expert, know. But it left one-third of a page blank at the bottom of p. 385, and also forced me to omit "Thalia," of which I wish to say, if I have never said before, that I admire it beyond measure; that I have thought it, since it first appeared in *Harper's*, the non-pareil of your lighter verse with a meaning. It is full of exquisite touches, of beauty, and mature wisdom; and no one who has not tried to end a veritable flesh and blood affection could have written the third stanza, or the last two lines of the poem. I vowed, with a great oath, that "Thalia" should be part of my book's legacy to the year 1950 or furthermore. You must not be nervous over my omission of the second clause of the sub-head; it went finely with the illustration in *Harper's*, and possibly is well enough in your own edition; but the lyric, like all true poems, can well afford to leave that clause to the imagination. I consider the first clause a real part of the title, and in omitting the second am following the rule of the "Anthology" in relation to most poems, sonnets, etc., with preliminary or illustrative notes. Make all the corrections you wish on the proof, and return them, and I will have them made right in the plates. Am too tired to say another word except to send my love to Lilian and to hope that this long letter will not reduce you to my condition.

To Oliver Herford.

November 10, 1899.

My nefarious young friend, I have beguiled my illness by means of "The Bashful Earthquake" and also have read all of your metrical audacities which my secretaries can find in certain magazines.

Like a detective I never arrest a man until I have got a sure case. Now I am quite satisfied that I have found enough of your delightful fyttes, already, to make it sure that my "Anthology" will be a dead failure unless some of your verse is in it, besides, I wish to show that America can hold over the Rands, Dodgsons and such like who are in my "Victorian Anthology," so I press you not only to give me leave, but also to lend me clippings (*which shall be carefully returned to you*) of any little things which you would like to have me consider and which are neither in "The Earthquake" nor unable to be separated from their illustrations; that is things that are more if possible to the author than to the author's friend, the illustrator. Hereof, fail not, gentle Oliver, and you will find me more than ever. . . .

To Carolyn Wells.

April 5, 1902.

Your letter finds me here, where, for my sins, I was induced by my Lares and Penates to spend the Winter and Spring; rather, I should say, to permit our visitors to spend it for us! So much to do, so little done.

But I pick your very nice letter, from a score of others not quite so nice, for the prompt answer which it deserves. "Why 'deserves'"? you will modestly ask. To which I reply: because you are a woman and a writer after my own heart. I did not suppose there was a clever woman living (you remember Virgil's *irae in caelestibus animis*) who could or would regard matters so impersonally as you do. For you speak so kindly of those grewsome big Anthologies, when, although you are quite as good a poet as many represented therein, not a line of your own verse appears in the American volume. And yet it was not that I did not know of it and you: at least two of your books are on my shelves at home. But I did not find anything in them, sparkling as they were, as good as *you* can and will write in the years before you. What I did put in of various light-verse poets *is* as good as *they* are likely to write. There is a subtle tribute here, if you take my meaning.—All the same, I think you are "a dear" to salute me so handsomely, and I shall not forget it.

How provoking that my very first return must be to tell you that I can't help you one little bit to new or old sources of good nonsense-verse. Indeed, needing help myself, I came near to

writing *you* for aid, three years ago. I do not know that field—outside of the familiar demesne which you indicate. But perhaps I can put you on a trail a little out of the common. Why not hunt up the single *bits* thrown off by the famous? E. g.,—as when Charles Lamb replied to the spinster who insisted on having him give her his ideal of a wife:

"If ever I marry again,[x] [x mark the again]
I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
And sit all day in the bar
And drink cold brandy-and-water!"

This is quoted from memory, and probably incorrect, but it is in the way of what I mean.—But lo, you have filled my sheet. Unfortunately, *all* my *reliquiæ* of the Anthology collections are at this time in my (tenanted) country house, and I can't get at them. But I am sure there is "nothing doing" there.

From Brander Matthews.

October 10, 1900.

Who was the humble stranger who was asked at the court of Louis xiv what most astonished him there? And who answered "To find myself here." I shall think better of my little ballad now it has been my passport to so honorable a company. And I shall ever be doubly grateful to the editor who countersigned it.

To praise your selection is but impertinence. The thing needed to be done, and you have done it, once for all, as no one else could have conceived it even. Insight, scholarship, thoroughness, taste, tact, skill—all are there and all in due proportion.

From Julia C. R. Dorr.

October 12, 1900.

You have made me very happy by sending me the Anthology. I am writing in bed whither I was driven some days ago by a cruel attack of Bronchitis, and have been holding my pen in rest while trying to find a fitting adjective to exactly express my thought of the book. I can't do it. "Satisfying" perhaps comes nearest, it is so broad, so just, so generous, so inclusive—and I might add so *ex*clusive of whatever is unworthy. But what a stupendous work! It makes one's head whirl to think of it. I imagine there will be a chorus of surprise at the general high

quality of the verse enshrined between the covers of this new Anthology. The introduction is superb,—so clear, so convincing, so exactly to the point;—and the arrangement perfect.

I said you had made me happy by sending me the book, not solely for its value, great as it is,—for of course I should have bought it—but because it is an evidence of your friendly remembrance. And may I not thank you for your kind words in the Biographical Note concerning J. C. R. D.?—But how old I must be, to find myself so near the beginning of this big book! Mrs. Howe, the Stoddards and I, are almost if not quite the only workers still left who belong in the third division of the first period. But, my dear friend, save for a certain lack of elasticity and strength, I feel as young as ever I did. Certainly mine was no mushroom growth. I matured slowly, very slowly. The young women, the young writers of to-day are a surprise as well as a delight to me. How did they learn it all? We older folk had to creep and walk before we could fly,—at least I did. They soar at the very start. And they know so much! As I look back it seems to me I had no regular training. I browsed in my father's library, I learned Latin—God be praised for *that!*—and I loved to dabble in shallow depths of what was called mental and moral science. But so much that girls are taught now, or drink in with their mother's milk, I have had to pick up by the wayside as I went along—And yet half the delight of life has been in that very picking up, so why should I grumble?

If one could only be sure of beginning in the next world where one leaves off in this! We just get command of our tools when the hand wearies and we have to drop them,—which seems hard sometimes.

From H. H. Furness.

October 14, 1900.

O Stedman dear, how can I sufficiently thank you for the noble work you have done for our American Poetry! I have longed, and watched, and waited for just such an Anthology as your generous bounty has even now sent me. Thanks for it, thanks pressed down and running over. What endless fields you have traversed, what a keen vision you have had for every flower; nothing seems to have escaped you, and with what judgment you have made your selection! In the length and breadth of the land there's not a man

but yourself who could have woven such a garland. And, indeed, does not our country make a fine display? No American can look through your pages without pride. Throughout the whole domain where English is spoken, has the Nineteenth Century produced a poet whose words have sunk deeper into the heart than Emerson? Tennyson's music will thrill the hearts of angels, but Emerson's magic lines will echo and re-echo in the soul of man. But, O man of taste, severe and pure, could you not withstand the pressure, doubtless put on you, to include the bawbling idiocy of ———? I have never seen so many of her—her—(I don't know what to call 'em, verses they are not) her *words* gathered together and I thought I was reading a back number of the *Opal* published by the inmates of the Bloomingdale Lunatic Asylum—I screamed with laughter over them, and then heaved a bitter sigh that within the covers which held Emerson, Bryant, and Lowell there should be bound up such (pardon the word) Rot. But I know it was not your fault. You couldn't help it. Heaven alone can pardon those who first put such drivelling into print,—man cannot or at least this man cannot. One word more—and 'tis a delicate subject I now have to touch upon. You know the fire at Lippincotts consumed all the edition of "Much Ado about Nothing," and with it burnt up all record of the presentation copies which had been mailed or had not been mailed (they told me all had not been sent off at once). Many of my dearest friends received no sign from me that another of my milestones had been passed. I wrote with joy your name in a copy—did you ever get it? 'Twasn't worth a "thank ye;" but I can't resign the honour of having one of my books on your shelves. Prithee let me hear. If your copy went up in smoke, you shall have another at once. . . .

From Barrett Wendell.

October 17, 1900.

The "American Anthology" came to me yesterday, with a card of greeting from both author and publisher. The pleasure it brings me is enhanced by the impulse it incites at once to tell you how admirable the work seems. It is beyond question a literary monument—a document in our National history of which no one can quite feel the excellence, in all its scope, who has not been engaged in serious study of the matters it deals with. Anyone can feel both its tact and its thoroughness, but by no means every one

can feel the sentiment of humble wonder that such work can have been done so completely. Whatever the future, this book must always remain a priceless document for any student of our literary history.

Before long I shall have the pleasure of sending you the "Literary History of America" which has been making my life a burden for three or four years. You will not take in it as much pleasure as your admirable Anthology brings me; for you will see, as clearly as I, its defects—and defects I fail to see in this book of yours. But I hope you may find in mine at least a clear expression of what opinions the thought of a good many years has slowly matured in me.

Incidentally, I could not have done what I have without the daily help of your "Library." You and Arthur have been incessantly in my mind. I am peculiarly glad, then, that the means comes for telling you how much, through the years since I wrote "Emilia," I have thought of your helpful, sympathetic friendship. It has not been my fortune to make literature; and the time is past, I suppose, when I may very rationally hope to. But if anything would have made me, it would have been such whole-souled encouragement as came from you, and when the first history of our letters is written, I doubt if it can ever include a name more widely, deeply, humanly animating than yours.

From R. W. Gilder.

October 17, 1900.

No one can know better than I how you have spent yourself on this "American Anthology." It is, indeed, a generous gift of yours to your fellow-poets—it might be almost called a creative work on your part—a contribution to American Literature—for much of even the best that is in the book might wait long for an audience were it not for the seal of your appreciation. I turned first to see if you had done yourself justice and was glad that you were fitly represented, though I could have added some favorites of my own to the Examples of Stedman. I was much gratified by your selections from your old friend, R. W. G.—Somehow the pieces seemed to have a new resonance under your Editoring—the compilation put life into the separate parts; you displayed my plain people so advantageously that really I had a novel pleasure in them—and, also, how often they seem to the author of them as being flat and insufficient.

I can't help feeling that your book may stir up an interest in the bards of to-day—sometime before the poor fellows all pass into silence.

I wonder if you are rhyming at all now-a-days. I am better for my trip abroad—and have quite a pile of unpublished pieces. In the hundreds of lines I think I know just two that are entirely satisfactory.

From William Winter.

October 18, 1900.

I can write only a few words now, but I write them from a grateful heart. I have received your lovely letter, your noble portrait, and your wonderful book. You have done *me* great honour: but—far beyond that! as I see by one rapid survey of the work, you have traversed every part of an enormous field and with unerring judgment and faultless taste, have culled from it its fairest flowers. I deeply feel the affectionate kindness with which you have remembered me. These words are only to say that I have received your gifts—the golden bounty of a royal mind—and that I thank you for them over and over again. They are very precious. I do not now pretend to answer your letter—but only to say that these treasures are safe. The Book is a magnificent achievement and it entwines your name forever with all that is brightest and most beautiful in the literature of your native land. I am, most gratefully and affectionately, your old comrade and friend.

From W. Garrett Horder.

October 19, 1900.

I feel greatly indebted to you for the early sheets of your new Anthology. I have looked over it with very great pleasure and congratulate you on the accomplishment of so large a task. It is to me a book of immense interest and should do much to make folk regard the poetic writers of your country with more respect. It is the best representation of the Poetry of America I have seen—far and away the best—even to the ordinary reader it must be most interesting. I am your debtor for the copy and still more for doing such a work.

Of course in such a vast task, one wonders at the absence of certain names, especially David Atwood Wasson. I regard his "All's Well" as fine in thought and lyric in expression. What

about Gannett and Hosmer? Surely they have in some of their pieces shown the true lyric gift.

A curious thing has just happened. Mr. H. W. Lucy, the "Baronite" of *Punch* got hold of my Treasury and was fascinated by the new poem I gave of Anna Jane Granniss. I got the book "Skipped Stitches" for him and he has another quite a glowing little eulogium in *Punch*—of all good places in the world—praise of a poem on Death! She has a new book in the press for which I have written her a short introduction. Her books have been privately printed and have had a large sale. Probably you know all about them. I fancy folk on this side will be a bit startled at Mrs. Finch's poem—clear but realistic.

You will feel quite strange now that you have completed your great work on the Victorian and American poets. You will sigh for new worlds to conquer. You have made us all your debtors and for my part I gratefully acknowledge the debt.

To Charles Henry Webb.

November 10, 1900.

My dear Gratiano, your lovely letter from "Grauwinkle," respecting the "*Victorian* Anthology," has been before me for some weeks, awaiting the time when I should cease to be snowed under by letters rebuking my sins of omission and commission in this grewsome "American Anthology"; also held up by a hand swollen with gout, and unable to guide a pen. Now comes this morning a condensed avalanche from you, on top of the aforesaid snowdrift. To vary the metaphor, I am moved to compare it to one of those snow-balls soaked in water and frozen, with which the "Falls village boys" in Old Norwich used to attack our "Uptown gang" in Winter raids.

"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"
("Lay of the Last Minstrel")

The result is, you see, that I am stung into rejoining forthwith, though by the hand of *my* "Dot"—to wit: Laura, Jr., otherwise "June."

First, my sincerest thanks for your Victorian corrections; they come just in time for the first *XXth Century Edition*, otherwise the "9th impression."

O, my dear C. H. W.! My dear "John Paul"! My beloved

Gratiano! Here's a pretty mess! And I wanted so much to please you, because there are only three or four left of *us*. I hoped you would like the selection of my poor favorites among your poems. I didn't put in "Alec. Dunham's Boat," because it was in the "Library of American Literature," and I wished to make a variation to some extent. Nevertheless, I am certain that my selections do not please you or you wouldn't write me so curtly, even though the biography does say that you ran away to sea, and horror of horrors! that you once traded in Chicago. That last accusation is a dire one, I confess, but you ought to be proud of having run away to sea; and should stick to it, even if it is "greatness thrust upon you." *All* the greatest men have run away to sea in youth; at least, that has been the case all along the shore in Old England and New. *I* ran away to sea, from New London County. If you didn't run away to sea, it was because Lake Champlain was not Long Island Sound or Martha's Vineyard. I believe that you did run away to sea, and that you were disgruntled yesterday for the same reason that I am, namely: because, the big election market has run away from us both, leaving us bare of stock. As for myself, I am this week a terror in the household, simply because there is hell to pay on 'Change and I am a "rank outsider," and have no pitch hot.

But you are quite right in your indignation as to Chicago.

"Won't" I "omit the biography?" No, indeed. But I will insert a new one in the edition about to go to press, if you will give me the correct data, so that I can make it just the length of the mendacious first draft. And now let me tell the whole story.—The "facts" in that draft were supplied by Arthur Stedman's "brief biography" in the "Library of American Literature," Vol. xi., and he is responsible for them, and is supposed to have obtained them from you. I understood that you approved of *his* biography, which has been in print since 1890, as you can see by examining the set of the "Lib. Am. Lit." at the Authors Club, or elsewhere. When Arthur wrote those notes he obtained, in the case of living authors within reach, his materials from their respective selves. With his work during the test of ten years so little fault has been found that I have greatly relied upon it for many of my new biographical notes—especially under the disabilities resulting from my prolonged illness.

And now write me again, and tell me just what to say. Also

sail into Arthur when you next meet him. Then there is that dear little wife of yours, who has had so much to suffer of late—you distress me by making me think that any unwitting lapse of mine could give her a moment's pain.

From Charles Henry Webb.

The Authors Club

—of a Wednesday, and yesterday I thought I'd be "he that died o' Wednesday," for I suffered from an awful cold, caught in this palace of un-Bohemian draughts.

My dear Bassanio, Surely if Dr. Palmer does not object to your killing him, *I* should not be seriously disturbed over simply an attempt on—or at—my Life. I *did* go to sea—not before the mast but *with* the mast, at the same time, simultaneously, as it were. And after I had dropped the letter to you in the mail box I wished I could fish it out again. And had resolved to never again mail a letter without a string to it. To confess the truth, though, it did for a moment seem to me that I had done worthier things than live in Chicago—which I never did. As well as you, did I not stub Burnaby Waste while lots of these duffers were preaching one sermon a week? Didn't I notice your poems when I was doing that sort of thing on the *Times* when the *Times* was a paper and Raymond ran it? Didn't I confuse the wretches of publishers who refused my travesties by publishing them myself and making money out of them? Did I not publish Mark Twain when all the publishers refused him? Didn't I pilot him to Sacramento for an engagement with the *Union* to write letters from the Sandwich Islands? Didn't I get his hat checked to the Islands and back when the *Union* wouldn't advance the money for his fare? And who reared the stately columns of the *Californian* and enshrined therein Bret Harte, Mark Clemens, Ina Coolbrith, Charles Warren Stoddard, and others too tedious to mention? Yet have I never posed as a Pumblechook. But who lightened the labors of the weary accountant by adding an adder to human life? Who freighted *the* pages of the *Tribune* with John Paul letters? Who —but I may weary you? Who did everything else but live in Chicago? As for California, I lived in Europe longer—and better —than there. In Nantucket I spent many summers. But I shall

not sail into Arthur. When the Man-Who-Can't-Hear interviews the Man-Who-Can't-Talk, little the wonder that things get mixed. Still, I can but think that you ought to have given Dr. Palmer a chance to say whether or not he was alive, me to say whether I had ever lived or died in Chicago.

Looking through the new Anthology here, my eye was caught by a will-o'-the-wisp flare of beauty and brilliance "Little Wild Baby." Here, said I, is a diamond of a writer very different from the milk-and-water of the other gems that are scattered around. And I turned to the biographical notes—where I lived in Nantucket and Chicago—to see who had turned it up. It was capital, what you said. I'm so glad you said it. I'd not like to be on the magazine—or editor, I mean that refused such a bit of verse.

By the way "Gil, the Toreador" none of them would have, and "With a Nantucket Shell"—which you also had in the "Library of American Literature," and which Mr. Warner took for his Library of the Best, also found no favor with the editors of magazines.

You've done yeoman work on this new Anthology—remarkable work on a remarkable book. Where you unearthed all these poets, and how, puzzles me to imagine. Each has his or her uses, and for showing the growth of versifications and the wide-spread writing of it, the volume is without a parallel.

But what I mainly set out to say is this:

"Antony to Cleopatra" captured my fancy, when I was doing my first success,—Saratoga letters for the *Times*—I met Gen. Lytle, at the Springs. I bowed low and paid him honor. You may remember—being then in the spring of youth yourself—that the verses were widely copied, even getting, I think, into the *American Agriculturist.* He was vexed at the errors that crept in and multiplied, and wrote out his own version for me. Now if I remember rightly the last half of the 3rd stanza reads:

"*Hear*, then, pillowed on thy bosom
Ere yon star shall lose its ray,
Him who drunk with thy caresses
Madly flung the world away.

The copy I had shown him read *Here*—which he said, made nonsense of the context.

The 5th line of the 4th stanza ran, as I remember, "Seek her, say the Gods *have told me*."

In the last stanza it was "Let me *face* (not front) them ere I die."

I wonder am I wrong? When I get back to Nantucket I'll see if I can find the copy Gen. Lytle wrote for me.

That's a remarkably dictated and remarkably taken down letter, that of yours to me. I'm surprised that your daughter—or is it your granddaughter—lets you dictate to her. Mine does not let me. Not a mistake nor an erasure in the whole of it. And if Imitation be the sincerest flattery, then you must be overwhelmed by it in a hand-writing which everyone takes for yours. . . .

To John W. Chadwick.

November 15, 1900.

So many letters have come in daily—and often, I must confess, reporting errors of type or fact which have required immediate attention,—that until this morning I have repressed my impulse to tell you how warmly grateful I am for your painstaking, sympathetic, and charmingly written article on the "Anthology." It is the work of "a man of feeling," a born writer, a scholar—yes, and of a Unitarian and independent, but first of all the work of a fellow-poet. There will be no later review by one possessing *all* these attributes. Your paper interests me more, and is—coming from you—of more value to me, than careful reviews in journals of much wider circulation than our little *Unity* enjoys. That paper, by the way, reaches me weekly from Mr. Kent, who is a son of my classmate and friend, Albert E. Kent, Yale '53. The only review approaching yours, thus far, was by some hand as yet unknown to me, in last Sunday's *Tribune* ("Supplement"). I don't know whether you saw that issue, but the article would obtain your admiration for its noble style, its breadth, and its novel and courageous recognition of the high courage and influence of the poetry of America in the XIXth Century. In the last-named matter it has taken me by surprise.

But I am greatly touched by your own attention to the "A. A.," in the midst of your exacting duties, and I am impressed with the value of the few critical (reservations) which your friendliness permits you to make, with nearly all of these, upon reflection, I quite agree, and I am sure there are many more which your good-will

and space limits kept you from declaring.—You are aware that I have edited this big book while under many disabilities, and absolutely apart from the aid and advice of colleagues. If I could only have had you in a near-by Lawrence Park cottage, *we* would have turned out a better article! Now I wish that I could have (i. e. that I *had*) put the hymnology in your hands. Perhaps you would have leaned too much to the transcendental and spiritually didactic. (We Unitarians have a didacticism of the spirit, if I may coin such a phrase)—Did you know that I was brought up under a *Congregational* roof, with five *Episcopal* bishops among my kindred, and finally attended no Church until I found free-thought under Mr. Frothingham? Personally, I like the English *hymns* of Brown, Lyte, Newman, etc., better than our own—they seem less sophisticated.—I am now going to read closely your Theo. Parker, which I receive from your true hands. There was room for just this compact biography, and we are all glad it fell to you to make it. . . . Why do you dine at Edmonton, while I must dine at Ware?

To M. Nicholson.

November 16, 1900.

While perfectly aware that it is *contra bonos mores* to ask questions, I very much long to know who wrote the beautiful review of "An American Anthology." The adjective is inadequate;—it is long since I have read a newspaper review so thoroughly in "the grand manner" as respects description, style, scope. Above all, I was surprised and delighted by the opinion of the writer as to the relative showings of the British and American compilations, and by his courage in avowing it. It is a breath of mountain air—so outspoken a recognition of what our own people have done since 1800. This pervading element in the article gratified me far more, you may well believe, than even the critic's indulgences with respect to my editorial merit and demerits.

For some reason I have the idea that the review was not by the literary editor. At all events, I wish to express my appreciation to its author, and so (if you think it better to withhold his name) will you not kindly convey to him this statement of it?

Of one thing I am certain—the book may have many extended reviews, but there will not be any other comparable to that of last Sunday's *Tribune*.

To T. B. Aldrich.

November 19, 1900.

There is a nice and characteristic criticism in your signed (*mirabile dictu !*) letter of the 15th, and it goes into a package of choice "culls" from a lifelong correspondence—a package that enlarges very slowly when one considers the burthen of my daily mail.—One word about the portrait of Lanier. There are *seven* New England poets (including Bryant, and the engraved grave of Emerson) represented on my frontispiece and title-page. My book purports to be a *National* exhibit. Without Lanier, the South had only Poe. And Lanier's their next best boast among their dead poets; moreover, many lovers of poetry, of more or less "importance in their day," invest him and his work with ideal attributes. As for me, my view of him is carefully set forth in the "Poets of America," and twice in the "Nature of Poetry"—the lectures which I delivered in Baltimore to his immediate adherents. In substance, that view is precisely like yours—that he was essentially a musician. But he was an intellectual one, and also was a lyrist in words, as his shorter ballads, etc., show. Poe aimed at *melody* in verse, and succeeded. Now, Lanier *aimed* at "harmony," at "thorough-bass"; he tried to be a metrical Bach or Beethoven, to make verse do what *only* music can do. In this he ignored Lessing's law that no one of the fine arts *can* fully do the work of any other. Of course he failed, but if he had lived I think he would have done something fine, while trying after his impossible end—just as the alchemists founded chemistry while trying to transmute base metals into gold. *I* don't care for spasmodic and rhetorical measures, like those of Lanier's "Sunrise," etc. For that reason, though I admired the man and his artistic spirit and mould, I declined to edit his poems, with a memoir, and Dr. Ward performed that work. But as a national anthologist I needed Lanier, and not Halleck or Taylor, for that frontispiece, and believe that you will conclude that my argument is sound. Dear old Halleck! it is sad—how few of the new folk read those four virile lyrics that exhausted his minstrel forces. I am glad you still care for them as much as I do. As for Poe; after editing his PROSE, as well as his verse, and writing my best three essays on him, in that 10 vol. edition, I have no doubt whatever as to his remarkable place in the literature of his period. Nor has Woodberry. . . . So glad to have that book-plate: the Herrick

essay is quite beyond any gloss of mine, save envious admiration.

From Hamilton W. Mabie.

November 19, 1900.

I was in Virginia when the copy of the "American Anthology" came, getting a glimpse of Jamestown and Yorktown, breathing the air of old Williamsburg, and talking to the boys of Old William and Mary. You would have enjoyed some of the fine flavored Virginia gentlemen of the Old School whom I met, who were curing gout by still deeper potations of Port and Madeira. I have had the book at hand since I came home and have grown into a clear recognition of the fact that you have put American poetry on a new plane. I did not realize that there was so much of it, and that so much of it is really and solidly good. I shall celebrate the conclusion of your survey of poetry on both sides of the sea in my inadequate fashion very soon. I congratulate you that the work is finished and in a way which no one else could have compassed. The integrity, the thoroughness and the fine intelligence with which you have made this great critical study fill me with admiration. You have put as much character, as insight and knowledge, into the undertaking. It will not be done again. I fear I shall not be present at the Authors Club on December sixth, because I shall probably speak in a Yale course that evening; but I shall wish myself with you on [the] occasion. You know how much I have valued your work for years, how much I have gotten out of it, and how deeply I have felt the steady and high-minded purpose behind it. It stands apart from the quick, half-finished work most men have been doing; and it will last when much of temporary work has had its day. I send you my affectionate congratulations.

To Henry A. Clapp.

January 31, 1901.

Returning from the "still-vexed Bermoothes," I find nothing better worth my gratitude than the most full, considerate, and suggestive review of my "Anthology," in the Boston *Advertiser*, under your signature. How an author or studious compiler delights in subjection to a *well-equipped critic*, the praise of such a one is elevating, his censure and commendations are of real value. Your *précis* admits you fellow-master of my field, and I wish no

better satisfaction than the comprehension of an associate like yourself.

As to a compilation of the sort; if one had leisure and a compact with Life and Time, his ideal process would be to keep it before critics and the public long enough to test its comings and shortcomings, and then—to edit it all over again as a permanency! That is the way in which the Jamaica natives marry, as I observed during my winter in their gorgeous hills. A couple live together on trial for a year ("on suspicion?") and then, if the tests hold, go before the parson. *Ad interim* they are not permitted to attend communion, but remain in a kind of Limbo. The system works very well, and an uproarious wedding, for which money has been carefully saved, usually follows at the end of the twelve-month. But I can spare no year to go over, a second time, the verse of a hundred years, though I *have* already corrected as many errors for the edition just going to press.

How nice that you should light upon that remarkable poem—"The Unborn"! I found it in a cheap Southern magazine, and conferred with Houghton, Mifflin as to the advisability of preserving it. To their honor, every member of the firm spoke up for its inclusion.—But I am writing too long a letter, when I intended simply to convey my thanks and appreciation.

To T. B. Aldrich.

June 29, 1901.

How should my soothsaying prevail when you fail to read the stars! However, looking again at "The Indian Burying-Ground," I don't interpret it as expressing a belief that man's notion of immortality is a "delusion," but as expressing a recognition of the proof that the *Aborigines* evidently *did* believe in an active future existence. He precedes this by a slant at his own white races for unwittingly, by the posture chosen for their dead, typifying the Hereafter as an Eternal Sleep. I suppose you remember that Campbell "lifted" a line out of this poem, just as Sir Walter borrowed one from "Eutaw Springs." The last stanza of "Eutaw," by the way, assumes a future "happier land." "Plato to Theon," on the whole, seems to me the key to Freneau's mode of thought concerning life, death and immortality. He was always elegaic, always reflecting on the vanity and brevity of earthly life—whether at an Inn or among Ruins—but, with the classic philos-

ophers, left the whole matter to the Powers that Be. That was the current feeling in those days, with the scholarly class—affected by Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and so on—but not ready to give up courage as to the soul, though skeptical as to Christian theology. . . .

Yes: there are *lots* in the "American Anthology"—just as the Preface claims. I believe it will be consulted long years from now.

From Anna Bowman Dodd.

June 18, 1901.

It is the Choir Invisible of America's finest and noblest singers led by the Master-leader's baton. Open it where I may, and the birds, flowers, plains, mountains, and rivers of our dear country are as visible to eye and ear as when Siegfried hears his "Bird-music." And throughout the volume, so admirably chosen are each and every poem, there breathes the spirit of our fatherland—that rare, fine, pure spirit doubly loved and cherished when tested by Old—and older—World standards. You may have cleverer critics of your great work, dear friend, you can have no truer more constant lovers and admirers than Edward and I. It is on our library table, to be turned to in the lonely, sad, or tender mood; to be produced as the most telling of proofs of the high quality of American poetry; to be my own accepted standard of critical excellence, of patient toil, of victory over the dragons in every true worker's path. I shall prize it all my life as among the greatest of gifts given me.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE OFFICIAL POET

For a generation Stedman was our most popular American Poet of Occasion, the Universal Official Poet, as it were, upon whom a large neighborhood reliance was placed for an illuminating, artistic, sympathetic, even prophetic, expression of the dominant spirit or ideal. So far back as undergraduate days his appointment had become routine. One may repeat the hackneyed phrase that rarely or never did he fail to "rise to the occasion." It is indeed peculiarly true of Stedman that his poems are almost always "of occasion," because he was so vitally interested in the past or passing event,—especially if it looked forth to larger and higher issues—that with him its significance sprang spontaneously to verse. *Pan in Wall Street*, *The Prince's Ball*, *The Diamond Wedding*, *The Blameless Prince*, *Alice of Monmouth*, the Carib Sea Verses, and the rest, were poems of just-past occasions, while in his rôle of Official Poet of Yale, or of Dartmouth, of Clubs and of Associations, the coming event was anticipated and the significance of the past that led up to it was recapitulated and carried into the warning or divination of the future. It is wonderful how pertinent, how perfectly he caught and imaged the spirit of the hour, the institution, the cause, the men, the man, of which he was the celebrant. If it was merely a class-dinner the genial and the genius were somehow fused with a thrilling sympathy, the past like a migrating bird winging toward the distant and certainly coming:

> Twenty years syne! the shadow eastward passes;
> Faster, every one, the seasons take their flight;
> Though our time has come to sing *Eheu! fugaces*,
> Round the old board we'll not be sad to-night!

Twenty years syne,—when we were spruce and slender,—
Larger now our waistbands, alack and well-a-day!
Still in our hearts there's something true and tender;
Boys we are to-night, though our heads are turning gray.
. . . . . .
Round the old board, with talk and song and laughter,
Each unto each shall gossip of his lot;
Here at Life's noon we look before and after;
Glad let us be, then, nor sigh for what is not.

And especially if, for instance, The Old Admiral's death inspired:

His ghost upon the shadowy quarter stands
Nearing the deathless lands.
There all his martial mates, renewed and strong,
Await his coming long.
I see the happy Heroes rise
With gratulation in their eyes:
"Welcome, old comrade," Lawrence cries;
"Ah, Stewart, tell us of the wars!
Who win the glory and the scars?
How floats the skyey flag,—how many stars?
Still speak they of Decatur's name,
Of Bainbridge's and Perry's fame?
Of me, who earliest came?
Make ready, all:
Room for the Admiral!
Come, Stewart, tell us of the wars!"

It required a brave heart to read as in the Dartmouth Ode, such lines to the leaders in authority:

Heaven has faded from the skies,
Faith hides apart and weeps with clouded eyes;
A noise of cries we hear, a noise of creeds,
While the old heroic deeds
Not of the leaders now are told, as then,
But of lowly, common men.
See by what paths the loud-voiced gain
Their little heights above the plain:

Truth, honor, virtue, cast away
For the poor plaudits of a day!
Now fashion guides at will
The artist's brush, the writer's quill,
While, for a weary time unknown,
The reverent workman toils alone,
Asking for bread and given but a stone.
Fettered with gold the statesman's tongue;
Now, even the church, among
New doubts and strange discoveries, half in vain
Defends her long, ancestral reign;
Now, than all others grown more great,
That which was the last estate
By turns reflects and rules the age,—
Laughs, scolds, weeps, counsels, jeers,—a jester and sage!

In 1873 the craftsmen of the printing offices of the United States agreed to contribute one or more pounds of old type to be used in making a statue of Horace Greeley, and to donate the payment for setting up one thousand ems, toward the expenses of making and erecting the statue. At the unveiling of the bust in Greenwood Cemetery on December 4, 1876, Stedman's dear friend Bayard Taylor was the principal speaker, and Stedman was the poet. He was lifted to noble heights by his inspiration:

He lives wherever men to men
In perilous hours his words repeat,
Where clangs the forge, where glides the pen,
Where toil and traffic crowd the street;
And in whatever time or place
Earth's purest souls their purpose strengthen,
Down the broad pathway of his race
The shadow of his name shall lengthen.

"Still with us!" all the liegemen cry
Who read his heart and held him dear;
The hills declare "He shall not die!"
The prairies answer "He is here!"

Immortal thus, no dread of fate
Be ours, no vain *memento mori:*
Life, Life, not Death, we celebrate,—
A lasting presence touched with glory.

The star may vanish,—but a ray,
Sent forth, what mandate can recall?
The circling wave still keeps its way
That marked a turret's seaward fall;
The least of music's uttered strains
Is part of Nature's voice forever;
And aye beyond the grave remains
The great, the good man's high endeavor!

Well may the brooding Earth retake
The form we knew, to be a part
Of bloom and herbage, fern and brake,
New lives that from her being start.
Naught of the soul shall there remain:
They came on void and darkness solely
Who the veiled Spirit sought in vain
Within the temple's shrine Most Holy.

That, that, has found again the source
From which itself to us was lent:
The Power that, in perpetual course,
Makes of the dust an instrument
Supreme; the universal Soul;
The current infinite and single
Wherein, as ages onward roll,
Life, Thought, and Will forever mingle.

Under date of May 13, 1877, an entry in the diary reads:

Finished my poem on "Hawthorne" at Summit [N. J.]—this anniversary of my brother's death. My never-forgotten, always mourned-for, only brother, Charley. I *think* the poem is at my highwater mark—as sustained, analytic, and imaginative, a piece, as I shall ever write. It has been done by piece-meal, in stolen and weary moments, as I could get them.

Two months earlier he had written: "I have a splendid subject for the Harvard poem—"The College of the Gods," but my mind is too fertile, and I could not get it into a thirty minute poem. *May* take "Hawthorne."

The invitation of the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard to deliver the Hawthorne poem, June 28, 1877, was one, as Stedman wrote the committee, "which any poet and New Englander well might hesitate to decline." Senator Bayard was the orator of the day.

From Boston, the day after the reading of the poem, Dr. Holmes wrote:

You will not wonder at my absence from Cambridge yesterday when I tell you that I had to attend an examination of candidates in the forenoon, that no less than seventy manuscripts, for every one of which a young man is trembling, in daily expectation of my verdict, are lying untouched before me, that on Wednesday next I have myself to deliver a poem at Woodstock, Connecticut, my father's birthplace, which poem is unfinished, that my letters are all unanswered and that an Englishman is hanging over me like an avalanche ready at any moment to drop upon me with a letter of introduction. It was practically impossible for me to be present, much as it would have gratified me. But I have read your poem and in one point of view found consolation in reading it for not having heard it. It is too thoughtful, too subtle, too artistically finished to be completely appreciated as recited before an audience. If the finest picture in the Vatican were mounted on rollers and made to slide before us at the rate of a man's walk, we should enjoy it, but we should miss more than half its beauties. So it is with such a poem as yours—I do not doubt that your audience was delighted because they must have felt that there was beauty in many passages they only half followed besides all they thoroughly entered into. But after all it is a poem to read, which is a much better thing than the cheap transparency which very commonly does duty on public occasions like the Φ. B. K. meeting.

I thank you for your fine characterization of our great romancer, for the graceful way in which you have spoken of our New England poets, and for the admirable contribution you have made at once to our poetical and our critical literature.

From T. B. Aldrich.

June 29, 1877.

I was not able, on account of an unavoidable engagement here, to get over to Cambridge yesterday; but Mr. Bugbee brought me a copy of the *Transcript* containing your poem, and that helped to console me for my losses. It is a noble poem, everywhere up to the height of the high argument, with something of the repose of statuary about it. From beginning to end it has an unhurried stately beauty. I think it by all odds the finest thing you have ever done. You may be sure that not a stroke of its careful workmanship escaped me. I know what all that firm smoothness cost. At the first reading, the large handling of the opening stanzas made me doubtful of an adequate climax; but the closing passages, and especially the last stanza with its beautiful image, was worthy of all that had gone before. I congratulate you with all my heart on having written the best poem of the kind ever written by an American. Until I get it in other type than this indistinct nonpareil of the *Transcript*, I shall keep my copy of the poem folded up in the volume containing Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis." I am sorry that my invitation to come to Ponkapog didn't clip your wings for you.

To this Stedman replied:

July 8, 1877.

My dear Tom: A week ago to-day I wrote you a postal card, at Putnam, and mailed it from New Haven the ensuing Monday. I hope it reached you, for it was in acknowledgment of your cordial invitation, and in explanation of my failure to receive the letter in season for acceptance. Reaching home after the 4th, I am intensely gratified and "sot up" by the evidence, contained in your letter of the 29th June and 2d July, that both myself and my poem have been more in your heart than we either of us had any right to expect. I haven't had so much valuable autographic "copy" from you, old boy, for a long time, and what you say has given me—there's no use in denying it—the keenest pleasure. If the Hawthorne poem had not been received with favor by you—and by the brilliant group of our fellow and master singers that listened to it, I should have felt greatly disheartened. For the theme grew upon me. I said—"I am old enough to write as much of a *masterpiece* as I ever can write"—and I threw my whole heart

into the work, with all the special and acquired gifts at my command. At first it seemed a risky experiment to provide a serious, "high-toned" poem for such an occasion. But again I said: "They have invited me to read a *poem*—not a burlesque—and I may safely take *those* people at their word." Well, the result really seemed to show that where an important matter is concerned one may safely be true to his art and to himself. I looked around for your longed-for and *supporting* face, but do not now regret the absence which secured me your letter. When you speak from your own fellow-craftsman's knowledge of the structure and building of the poem you give me just the kind of endorsement which others cannot give, and which is more precious than fine gold.

Very fine and interesting—your advance-leaf from "The Queen of Sheba." I wonder if your Savoyard cascade is the same as that which (as I read in my youth) Byron compared to the tail of the White Horse in the Apocalypse? It is over 30 years since I came across that passage, and I don't know where to find it now; but it powerfully impressed me. Your own description is exquisite. The idea certainly gave me just the image I needed. As a specimen of precisely "how *not* to do it" look at the enclosed anonymous card which has reached me. Of course my *first* thought was the commonplace one suggested by my adviser—the hackneyed completeness of a neophyte. But I instantly saw that the *suggestive*, and therefore poetical treatment would be that which kept the listener waiting for more and longing for more,—"To be continued," in the empyrean. Pray return this card, whenever you chance to write me, as I think it will make a good illustration for some future language upon the charm of *incompleteness* in art. By the way, the most delicious melodies in the minor key never seem to be ended when they end:—there is a "rising inflection" at the close.

And to Kate Field, he said: "My Hawthorne poem was called a success. I had Bret Harte's failure in my mind and resolved to do my best, before those Harvard owls and nightingales. They gave me a remarkable audience—Mr. Emerson told me he came down expressly to hear the poem. Besides, I fell in love with my theme."

Some other letters which came were:

From Constance F. Woolson.

September 16, 1877.

I am glad to see that the poem on Hawthorne is also coming out. It is indeed a noble poem; that is the exact adjective for it, in my opinion. Always looking at the ideas and feelings of a poem more than at the measure, it is only lately that the remarkable metre has forced itself upon my attention. It is so melodious and so perfectly sustained throughout, that, only upon examination, does one see how extremely difficult a measure it is. How could you do it? But I have always said that you are the only American writer I know who absolutely commands the language. Words walk right into their places at a glance! It is a marvelous power to me; I never cease wondering at it.—Yes, I like the "eighth verse" too; but I will not give up "my twelfth"; "the few and rude plantations,"—and the "Massachusetts Path," are so fine. "The one New Englander" is perfect. If I had known that Emerson was going to hear your poem, I would have—but no; I wouldn't, either. What I mean is that I would have liked to look at him. But I would not have liked even that if it had taken me into a crowd. I suppose it would have been almost impossible to have obtained an invitation, also. Emerson has been thrown at me all my life; out in Cleveland he has a few ardent disciples, and I have often heard them talk. But only within the last few years has he dawned upon *me*, and words can hardly express my *admiration* no, belief in *some* of his Essays. The sum of all earthly wisdom seems to me embodied in his "Nature;" "Essays"; "Second Series." (There are several "Natures.") I have two sentences of his copied and hung up on my wall at this moment. They help me when I feel disheartened, as nothing else does. And this wonderful man comes to hear you! What an event. Not that I consider him in the least a judge of poetry, in spite of his rhymes; but he is so great a man in his own sphere.

From Rose Hawthorne Lathrop.

November 11, 1877.

You can imagine, for you are a true poet, the fine, great pleasure I have felt in your love of my father's nature. I need only ask you to comprehend what such a feeling might be, in a daughter, to be satisfied with not attempting to express it myself.

Your poem is very beautiful and noble, and yet I had hardly a

deeper admiration for you after hearing it—and reading it—than before—for we have been earnest friends of yours, and felt that we knew your breadth and height before.

You must forgive my speaking so frankly. If I knew how to write a great poem, I should do so upon such fearless generosity as your own. Words in a letter of prose glitter unpleasantly sometimes, and such a sentiment as mine of gratitude is fitter for the veil of subtle expression. But I can only speak as I do.

Henry H. Clarke wrote: "There are no weak or halting lines eked out with feeble words, but all is strong, resonant and noble, as if your soul were in the expression and compacted every thought."

From Julian Hawthorne.

March 19, 1878.

I have only just received and read your volume of poems, which appears to have gone through a great many intermediate hands before reaching me. I thank you very heartily for it, and shall always value it both for the poet's sake and the poetry's. The titular poem I was of course already familiar with: I consider it the most true and beautiful tribute yet made to Nath. Hawthorne's genius. To have written it shows the existence in you of a vein of sympathy which, from the evidence of the bulk of your poetry, I was unprepared for. Most that you have written, perfect though it always is in form, and often touching or inspiring in conception, shows too much (I think) the traces of New England reserve. But in this poem on "the one New Englander" you forget yourself; and truer, more hearty poetry was perhaps never written than is to be found in it.—Some of the other pieces I like almost as well, and all of them I shall reread very often. You and Stoddard are the best poets now living, not excepting your friend Swinburne, whom I don't care for.

From Paul H. Hayne.

December 6, 1877.

Be sure that I have *made the time*, not only to *read*, but to *study* your little volume from *title*-page to *finis*. It proved a *very agreeable* study, I need hardly say.

Your "*Hawthorne*" *Ode* is *worthy of its subject*, in saying which, have I not said *all?*

Still I *can't* help going a little into detail, and remarking upon the marvelous *subtlety* of insight displayed; the same *analytical keenness* imaginatively and *rhythmically rendered*, which must secure for your prose Criticism (in the *Victorian Poets*), a permanent value, and acceptance. *Some* lines of your "Ode" in sooth, are pregnant with suggestive sweetness, or power, e. g.,

"An *eremite*, whose life the desert knew,
And *gained companionship in dreams alone:*" etc.
. . . "*One* who in his heart's deep wilderness
Shrunk darkling," etc.
"But sleepless even in *sleep*, *must gather toll*,
Of dreams, which pass like barks upon the river," etc.
. . . "That can predict so well
The whole flight from the flutter of the wing!"
[Superb!!]
. . . "The Beautiful . . . from his eyes
Looked outward *with a steadfast purple gleam!*"
"Deaf Chance and blind, that, like the mountain-slide,
Puts out youth's heart of fire, and all is dark!"

. . . . . .

"Saw the strong divinity of Will
. . . Bringing to halt *the stolid tramp of Fate.* [fine!!]
. . . The robin's voice; *the humble bee's wise drone!*
. . . Sees, beyond the shade,
The Naiad nymph of every rippling rill,
And hears quick Fancy wind her wilful horn."

. . . . . .

"Sister Beatrice" among the narrative pieces, is *very pathetic;* though frankly, it does not seem to me, *as a whole*, quite so deftly and carefully versified as your "Blameless Prince," for instance. But the sad story is feelingly told.

Of course "News from Olympia" charmed me, and "The Skull in the Gold Drift" struck me forcibly from its first appearance in the *Atlantic* years ago. "The Lord's-Day Gale" is a noble ballad; and I like your "Songs" and "Madrigals" for their absolute simplicity; but I must cease this bold "cataloguing" which expresses next to nothing!

You are, in fine, a *true* Poet, no less than a profound *Critic*. The Fairies dealt liberally with you at your birth, and 'tis evident that their generous endowments have been most conscientiously cultivated, strengthened, and improved.

May still further success attend you!!

Copy of letter and Poem by E. C. Stedman, printed in, "The Proceedings in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Nathaniel Hawthorne," held at Salem, Massachusetts, June 23, 1904:

LAWRENCE PARK, BRONXVILLE, N. Y.
May 18, 1904.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . The fact is that I am embarrassed by my inability to add anything to the tribute which I paid to the genius of Hawthorne before the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter of Harvard in 1877. That production was so near my heart that I made it the title-piece of a little volume published in the ensuing Autumn. Before your letter arrived I had two invitations to join in Hawthorne observances in other towns, and had replied that I must be excused. Of course a request from Salem would be to me far more compulsive. But I cannot be with you in person on the poetic and significant occasion for which you are preparing.

When my tribute was delivered, there were present, on the stage of the Sanders Theatre, Emerson—then passing into the clouds—Longfellow—Whittier—Holmes—Lowell, who spoke afterwards at the Phi Beta Kappa Dinner—the whole New England pleiad, as you see. And I never forgot the face of Rose Hawthorne, then in all her young sentiment and beauty, as she listened to me from the audience. No! I cannot add to my metrical utterance concerning Hawthorne, but I am grateful for your invitation, and I am glad that the City forever associated with his genius will not fall below her obligations and her fame on the approaching centenary.

I am with respect,
Very truly yours,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

Hon. Robert S. Rantoul.

Turning to this fine heart-tribute—the Phi Beta Kappa Poem—we find the great enchanter apostrophized as:

The one New Englander! Upon whose page
Thine offspring still are animate, and move
Adown thy paths, a quaint and stately throng:
Grave men of God who made the olden law,
Fair maidens, meet for love,—
All living types that to the coast belong
Since Carver from the prow thy headlands saw.

. . . . . .

Two natures in him strove
Like day with night, his sunshine and his gloom.
To him the stern forefathers' creed descended,
The weight of some inexorable Jove
Prejudging from the cradle to the tomb;
But therewithal the lightsome laughter blended
Of that Arcadian sweetness undismayed
Which finds in Love its law, and graces still
The rood, the penitential symbol worn,—
Which sees, beyond the shade,
The Naiad nymph of every rippling rill,
And hears quick Fancy wind her wilful horn.

. . . . . .

But he whose quickened eye
Saw through New England's life her inmost spirit,—
Her heart and all the stays on which it leant,—
Returns not, since he laid the pencil by
Whose mystic touch none other shall inherit!
What though its work unfinished lies? Half-bent
The rainbow's arch fades out in upper air;
The shining cataract half-way down the height
Breaks into mist; the haunting strain, that fell
On listeners unaware,
Ends incomplete, but through the starry night
The ear still waits for what it did not tell.

Stedman was the poet of the Bryant Memorial Meeting of the Century Club, November 12, 1878. Taylor, Bigelow, and Stoddard were the speakers. The poet asks:

How was it then with Nature when the soul
Of her own poet heard a voice which came

From out the void, "Thou art no longer lent
To Earth!" when that incarnate spirit, blent
With the abiding force of waves that roll,
  Wind-cradled vapors, circling stars that flame,
    She did recall? How went
His antique shade, beaconed upon its way
Through the still aisles of night to universal day?

Her voice it was, her sovereign voice, which bade
  The Earth resolve his elemental mould;
And once more came her summons: "Long, too long,
Thou lingerest, and charmest with thy song!
Return! return!" Thus Nature spoke, and made
  Her sign; and forthwith on the minstrel old
    An arrow, bright and strong,
Fell from the bent bow of the answering Sun,
Who cried, "The song is closed, the invocation done!"

Howells pronounced the poem "one of uncommon nobleness with high elegiac qualities"; "Nothing comes to Bryant more justly than such an offering as yours," said another. In his diary, the poet says:

Brilliant time at The Century. The whole affair (Bryant Memorial Services) a kind of symphonic poem. Macdonough read Taylor's Ode, Bigelow delivered his oration. Stoddard looked well, and read finely a grave, noble piece of blank verse. I followed with my poem, and really felt the spirit of the occasion. Was much gratified by the approval—I believe genuine—which all those cultured men, friend and stranger, lavished upon both Stoddard and myself. The music was exquisite.

Stedman wrote to Howells:

Now I'll tell you why, above an interest in the theme, I've taken such pains to write a real poem. The *World*, after Bryant's death, had a leader, possibly by our brilliant young friend Brownell. It pointed to the fact that the elder poets were leaving, and while allowing that Mr. Howells and Mr. Stedman were poets (he seeming to have a kindly feeling for these gentleman) utterly ignored other poets of our age, and said that we and the rest had been so

kept down by the "harpers hoar" that nothing short of a miracle would make us amount to much before the public, etc., etc. Now, Taylor, Aldrich, Stoddard, etc., etc., etc., are poets. It would have been more *gracious*, to say the least, to have said: "Now give these men a chance to let us see what they can do. Let us cherish what talent we have left." I resolved that my poem, at all events, on the occasion which had brought out this article should be an effort at true poetry—though I sometimes think our people do not yet feel poetry pure and simple, and that if Keats were to print the "Ode to a Nightingale" in a magazine, few critics, even, would take the trouble to read it—but *would* read a *local* idyl or song. I hope the other *Century* poems, if there be any, will be such as to show people that there still is corn in Egypt.—If I can't print mine in the magazine where I wish it, shall hold it back from the press.

What delicious poetry is to be found in "Meridian: An Old-Fashioned Poem," read at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his own Yale Class of 1853!

> The tryst is kept. How fares it with each one
> At this mid hour, when mariners take the sun
> And cast their reckoning? when some level height
> Is reached by men who set their strength aright,—
> Who for a little space the firm plateau
> Tread sure and steadfast, yet who needs must know
> Full soon begins the inevitable slide
> Down westward slopings of the steep divide.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Was it the magic of a moment's trance,
> A scholar's day-dream? Have we been, perchance,
> Like that bewildered king who dipped his face
> In water—while a dervish paused to trace
> A mystic phrase—and, ere he raised it, lived
> A score of seasons, labored, journeyed, wived
> In a strange city,—Tunis or Algiers,—
> And, after what had seemed so many years,
> Came to himself, and found all this had been
> During the palace-clock's brief noonday din?
>
> . . . . . .

SPOONER TOBEY BOND BISSELL GILBERT LEWIS WAITE WOODWARD WHITE KNEVALS
WHITON COIT STEARNS DOWD HARLAND DOUGLASS WARREN THOMAS (C. L.)
ARMS STEDMAN WESTON HOLMES HART CALLIN (L. A.)

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YALE CLASS OF 1853 AT ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

A. D. White was not present when the picture was taken; his photograph subsequently inserted

A grave, sweet poet in a song has told
Of one, a king, who in his palace old
Hung up a bell; and placed its cord anear
His couch,—that thenceforth, when the court should hear
Its music, all might know the king had rung
With his own hand, and that its silver tongue
Gave out the words of joy he wished to say,
"I have been wholly happy on this day!"
Joy's full perfection never to him came;
Voiceless the bell, year after year the same,
Till, in his death-throes, round the cord his hand
Gathered—and there was mourning in the land.

At the opening session of the Summer School of Philosophy at Concord, July 11, 1881, Stedman read "Corda Concordia" of which two stanzas are representative:

Ah, even thus the thrill
Of life beyond life's ill
To feel betimes our envious selves are fain,—
Seeing that, as birds in night
Wind-driven against the light
Whose unseen armor mocks their stress and pain,
Most men fall baffled in the surge
That to their cry responds but with a dirge.
. . . . . .
Behind each captured law
Weird shadows give us awe;
Press with your swords, the phantoms still evade;
Through our alertest host
Wanders at ease some ghost,
Now here, now there, by no enchantment laid,
And works upon our souls its will,
Leading us on to subtler mazes still.

In offering the poem, prior to its delivery, to Mr. Aldrich and to the *Atlantic*, Stedman explained:

Some months since I *think* that I wrote something to you concerning a poem, then unwritten, which I should prepare for the opening of the Concord School, July 11th. I said nothing definite,

as I was not sure what the poem might turn out to be, nor whether it really would be fitted for the pages of a magazine—of the *Atlantic*. It is now written, you see, and has somewhat grown upon me during its composition—so that it has taken to itself as much art and imagination as I command. I have concluded to withhold it from the press, and to bring it out in a magazine—and that, in view of the relations of Emerson, Thoreau, etc., to the *Atlantic*, and in view of my relations to you, it is my duty and pleasure to offer it first of all to you.

Not that I am at all sure you will care for it. In case you cannot make it available, you will of course say so without the slightest hesitation. In order that it might attract, and not weary, the general reader's eye, I have avoided long solid measures, like those of Gray's "Elegy," blank-verse, the irregular ode, etc.; and have found great delight in using the fine lyrical stanza of Milton's "Christmas Hymn"—so lyrical and yet so strong—only reducing the length of the closing line in each stanza. I hope you will like the effect.

The title, *Corda Concordia*, is an invention of my own—meaning Hearts (i. e. minds) in Unison; I always liked the *Cor Cordium* on Shelley's tomb. *Corda Concordia* enables me to make a quaint play upon "Concord," and to get a musical and not pedantic title for a philosophico-imaginative poem. The poem, after touching on the famous Concord group, handles a subject of the most absorbing latter-day interest—the wonders of scientific discovery and the need of something more ethereal to satisfy the *spiritual* wants of men.

To President James McCosh, of Princeton, Stedman wrote:

February 22, 1882.

An elaborate piece of work, in this busy season, has prevented me from obeying an impulse excited by the perusal of your racy and delightful paper on the Concord School. At last permit me to say how much I relished it. I have a fair excuse—though it has not been my privilege to meet you—for this letter, since you pay me the high honor of mentioning my prose work with an approval which you are too honest to extend to my verse.

I see that many, like myself, have enjoyed the keen and kindly humor of your review. Remembering that you are a metaphysician and college-president, we should cry—"O what an Ovid is in

Murray lost!"—were it not that you give us so much of this writing, full of flavor and good sense, that we really have small excuse for the ejaculation.

And now let me add that the poem read at Concord does not connect me with the down-East philosophy. The occasion, with its local associations, was so picturesque and poetic, that I accepted an invitation to open the session of '81 with a poem, in spite of a previous decision never again to read my verse in public. But I am not a transcendentalist, so far as one man's transcendentalism is held to be a guide for others. I hold, with every true poet, that a man's "inner light" is a guide for himself, but that any attempt to found a *system* upon it must fail. "Corda Concordia," (which, after all, wrote itself, the Miltonic measure once chosen), declares very plainly that *both* ancient philosophy and modern science—whose latest researches are described—have failed to get at the secret of things; that they always will, the search being vain, but that "finds" may be made on the way, somewhat as chemistry was advanced by alchemy. Curiously enough, the Quakers, with Mr. Whittier at their head, have taken up the poem as an exposition of their doctrine, perhaps because it intimates that one must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision within himself.

Even your Scottish inductive metaphysics, I will frankly own, seems to me little better than admirable mental gymnastics. This, of course, is due to my defective temperament, which is averse to abstractions,—and to which nothing appeals but the concrete, either as seen and experienced, or as *poetically imagined.* But one may none the less admire the vigor of the metaphysicians; and you, my dear sir, have proved that abstract speculations do not lessen the practical strength and wisdom of an able man. You have made us Yalensians jealous of Princeton College, and all men of letters, like myself are quick to recognize your voice and written hand.

From George R. Bishop.

September 17, 1881.

Let me append what Mr. Symonds says, in a post card, in which he acknowledges receipt of an *Atlantic Monthly* that I sent him, with your Concord poem *marked*, for the purpose of calling his attention to it. He speaks of it as—"The *Atlantic Monthly*, with its beautiful flower of song, so characteristic, both in warmth of

feeling and chastened culture, and in the rhetorical outpouring which befits a public occasion,—so characteristic is all this of American poetry as distinguished from English."

From John G. Whittier.

Oak Knoll Danvers
8 Mo. 7, 1881.

Dear Friend:

I have just been re-reading thy magnificent "Corda Concordia" and I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of pronouncing it the best occasional poem of the last quarter of a century. There is not a weak or superfluous verse in it: not too much or too little: it stands complete.

I dare say others more competent to speak than myself have told thee this before, but I must acknowledge the very great pleasure which it has given me. It has the antique beauty of the old masters of song, while it gives utterance to the earnest but reverent spirit of an age of Question.

Believe me very truly and gratefully thy friend

John G. Whittier.

Attached to the above letter is a Memorandum in Mr. Stedman's handwriting:

A letter from John G. Whittier, which I wish my children never to part with.

E. C. Stedman.

August 12, 1881.

A Memorandum written by Mr. Stedman on the large envelope containing the Whittier letters, says:

6 Precious Letters from Mr. Whittier (the first a voluntary one, and a rare surprise—about "Corda Concordia." It really began our friendship).

E. C. S.

After this, he always said I had the "inner light."

To John G. Whittier.

August 12, 1881.

I am quite overcome with thankfulness, and honest pleasure, by your generous letter,—so unstinted in its largess of the approval

dear to any poet's heart. It is the highest and most valued return which any of my work has ever made to me—or could make. I never shall part with it in life, nor will my children after me.

Your words have given me in my middle life, the very thrill which a young pupil feels in gaining the first honors at the hand of a revered Master. To feel that I have written something into the art and spirit of which you have found it worth while to enter, and which has moved you to offer me this beautiful and voluntary reward, is to make me count as nothing many of the failures and misfortunes, and to feel that even my life has been well worth living.

Your letter reached me in this breezy place of retirement, at the head of the St. Lawrence river, and no wind from Ontario has borne me so much refreshment. My mother, with whom your words are almost sacred, will be, like myself, deeply touched by this direct proof of your goodness.

To another correspondent Stedman wrote: "This is the only poem I ever read in public—good or poor—which I felt was taken at its worth."

Of Whittier, in "Ad Vatem," Stedman wrote these lines:

> At his sacred feet
> Far followed all the lesser men of old
> Whose lips were touched with fire, and caught from him
> The gift of prophecy; and thus from thee,
> Whittier, the younger singers,—whom thou seest
> Each emulous to be thy staff this day,—
> What learned they? righteous anger, burning scorn
> Of the oppressor, love to humankind,
> Sweet fealty to country and to home,
> Peace, stainless purity, high thoughts of heaven,
> And the clear, natural music of thy song.

"I have written," says Stedman to Whitelaw Reid, dated November 10, 1877, "fifty lines of blank-verse for Whittier's birthday, and never made any poetry that suited me better."

Offering in 1882 his poem, "On a Great Man whose Mind is Clouding" (Emerson), to the *Atlantic*, Mr. Aldrich answered: "I think that bit of verse is exquisite—a real cameo,

such as Landor would have carved, and would have liked if some one else had carved it. Of course I will set it in the fairest page of the *Atlantic*."

That sovereign thought obscured? That vision clear
Dimmed in the shadow of the sable wing,
And fainter grown the fine interpreting
Which as an oracle was ours to hear!
Nay, but the Gods reclaim not from the seer
Their gift,—although he ceases here to sing,
And, like the antique sage, a covering
Draws round his head, knowing what change is near.

In 1885 Stedman wrote a letter to a friend in which he said, "General Grant is fighting his last battle; I may write something suggested by it." The poem was entitled, "On the Death of an Invincible Soldier,"

Who, when the fight was done,
The grim last foe defied,
Naught knew save victory won,
Surrendered not—but died.

To Whitelaw Reid, Stedman wrote:

You are too much of an expert to regret the *simplicity* of this poem. The fact is that every line and word are studied, and the result suits me better than anything of the kind I ever have written. The poets who use *florid* and *varying* measures, for such occasions as this, often do so because their ideas and images are few and thin and will not do to exhibit *naked* and unaided—just as thin-voiced singers make use of trills and quavers, but avoid giving a pure and simple note that tests their quality.

I bespeak for this lyric a good place, strong type, an absolutely correct proof,—and then if it is wrong I'll not charge a cent for it, poor as I am.

The title may seem unusual to you. If so, it can be changed. But I look upon Grant as a Soldier and Patriot—nothing more or otherwise. I used the following title effectively, for two stanzas on Emerson (in the *Atlantic*)—"On a Great Man whose Mind is Clouding."

To another, at this time, Stedman wrote: "Grant's greatest greatness, to my mind, is what he gains as an *ideal* made up of the conceptions of greatness in millions of people's minds. The human race builds up an ideal—reflecting its own ideal nobility—and labels it Grant, or Lincoln, or Christ. Otherwise considered, I think you vastly overrate Grant—as compared with other chieftains, statesmen, founders of states and empires. He was a steady, comprehensive fighter, with little imagination, a faculty necessary to the higher order of greatness."

And to General Horace Porter:

Seriously, though, I am touched and gratified to find a man like yourself caring for these verses. There is nothing sensational about them—I tried to make them simple—and strong. But verse that is not eccentric or flamboyant attracts little notice in these days—when people prefer second-rate *vers-de-société* to the lyrics of Shelley and Keats, and ignore Byron altogether.

To George Alfred Townsend.

Your voluntary letter is one of the most gratifying honors that ever came to me. I don't know but I shall put it in a frame. Certainly it will stay by me and mine, so long as we have any local habitation. Horace Greeley used to say that he could tell whether he was steering right or wrong by the letters which people sent to him. I have been surprised, since yesterday morning, at those which have come to me from both comrades and strangers—and it may be that, even in these days of Watteau-piping and bric-a-brac verse, I have touched the great, strong and sensible public heart—it is everything to me to have struck a chord to which your impulsive and patriotic spirit vibrates, and to hear from you so fine an answering strain.

Concerning the noble poem, "The Hand of Lincoln," Stedman twenty years after its composition, said: "As I reread and rewrite it, I feel, as Holmes said of the *Chambered Nautilus* 'that when I wrote that poem I wrote better than I could.' It seems to me perfectly simple—Doric—yet a 'tender and trewe' characterization of my President." At

the time of its publication in 1883, Holmes wrote the author: "It pleases me so much that I must tell you how good I think it. Imaginative, but weighty with meaning, free from those rhyming and metrical tricks which the versifying confectioners are working their spun sugar artifices in,—manly, tender, musical. I have read nothing which I have liked so much for a long while."

Of "Liberty Enlightening the World," 1886, John Hay wrote Stedman, on December 29, 1897: "'Liberty Enlightening the World' holds me and shakes me as it did that morning when I first read it in the *Tribune*. It is the most powerful, the most vibrant poem of occasion anybody has done in our time. The last three stanzas are perfection at white heat."

To Charles G. Whiting.

November 10, 1886.

For a week I have been meaning to acknowledge the receipt of the *Republican* containing your very judicial and animating review of the Liberty poetry, and to thank you for your recognition of whatever is worth recognizing in my share of it. But a surge of professional and social duties carries off his feet a new-returner to this oceanic town. Besides, as you see above, we have been tumbling into a new (and quite cheery) residence—where I make sure to welcome you soon, on your usual Academic foray. But I must write you to-night, or not at all.

Did you know that Dudley Buck, in advance of your suggestion, *had* dashed off a lyric and choice piece of music to my words? He sent it over to me forthwith. It was impressive, and I sent it back to him, suggesting that the third and fourth stanzas need not be used for ultimate rendition of the hymn or ode. But you are perfectly right as to its musical adaptability. And, by the way, I could discourse at length on my experience and observation as to what constitutes the *enduring* qualities in a lyric composed for such an occasion. Look back through literature, and you will understand what I mean. I always knew that Taylor missed *the* chance of his life when he cast his Centennial Ode in irregular or Pindaric form. The first draft of my little lyric was as varying as O'Reilly's, but in the end I boiled it down to a carefully-studied metre and stanzaic arrangement.

This brings me to Mr. O'Reilly's Ode—very fine and glowing, as you say, and I always have taken kindly to his heroic sentiment and virile strains. But there is a curious circumstance, respecting this—his Liberty Ode, which I confess has puzzled and troubled me somewhat, though I am too busy to trouble myself greatly about my personal matters. But here goes—I am surprised that you have not observed more closely certain striking resemblances—at least, the antithesis—between the two poems—the first lines, as you do observe, so nearly the same: the conception of an invocation to Liberty, and Liberty's reply; the considerations of Freedom and Anarchy, etc. These all make O'Reilly's poem a sort of parody, commentary, possibly intentionally a *reply* to my own. I don't say a plagiarism, as Mr. O'Reilly has abundant fire and resources of *his* own. But the facts are these. The Editor of the *World* sent me a commission for a Liberty Poem. I wrote him that, finding there was (through the blundering of a fatuous Committee) to be no official poem, I *had* written a lyric on a subject that appealed so to the imagination, but had sold it the day before to *Harper's Weekly*. He then wrote to Mr. O'Reilly for one. Then the Harpers sent my poem to the New York press, several days in advance of their issue. It appeared in the *World*, *Tribune*, *Star*, *Journal*, etc., on Tuesday of that week. . . . It is years since I have had so many letters, from friends and strangers, about a poem, as came to me within forty-eight hours—and I really felt as if I had again touched the general heart in some way. You know my life-long feud with Mr. Dana, and of course *he* gave me a sneer, and as for my books, the *Sun* never reviews them at all. When Mr. O'Reilly's poem came on and out, many spoke to me of the coincidences I have noted. It seemed to me that probably he had mistaken my "Anarchy" verse, and was openly *replying* to my lyric as a whole. I may be wrong, but should like to know what you think about it. Perhaps he doesn't know I have been a life-long Socialist, of a decent kind, and am still; that I have lived in a Socialistic community—self, wife and children. However, on this theory, I found no fault with his poem. We have just been having a warm and fraternal correspondence on another topic. But I *now* feel deeply wounded, for he has sent me with his own hand a flaming copy of the *Pilot* containing his poem in display, and an editorial review or eulogy of all the other Liberty poems (quoting from them) and carefully omitting any allusion to mine. This is

so marked that I now have a different theory and feeling. Of course my lips have been sealed as to the matter. You are the first one to whom I have mentioned it—in this letter to a comrade, called out by your own kind and fair editorial. But you should say "Mr. O'Reilly 'also' does so-and-so" and not "Mr. Stedman *also*"—for I did it several days before his poem appeared.

I never have tried to "nurse" my own bantlings or reputation. It is a most unusual thing for me to write such a letter as this even to a friend. And I have no desire to raise any open question about a matter now gone by.

There is one thing that might well be commented on: the barbaric and disheartening undervaluation of writers and even artists in this great city, by all "officials." Do you suppose Boston, or Paris, would have had such an affair, without some other than a *plutocrat orator*—without a poet? Not a sculptor was invited to the ceremonies, that I can discover. If the barbarians had requested Mr. Stoddard, the dean of our guild here, to prepare and deliver an ode, all of us local writers would have felt that literature was recognized and that we were not as dogs in the sight of our masters. Some of us have toiled here, and tried to maintain "ideals" for many years, and we maintain even our self-respect with great difficulty, and often feel like quoting Matthew, III, 37! —There: I feel better for this midnight infliction upon you my friend, and am, in spite of it, ever sincerely. . . .

To Henry C. Robinson.

February 1, 1889.

Now as to the poem. After delivering my Harvard and Concord poems, I said that I would write no more poetry for public occasions and delivery—as you see by the enclosed circular, which I show you as a curiosity. And I have declined a score of invitations to write poems, within the last twelve months, on the plea that I was reserving myself for the Declaration Jubilee of 1976! But our first Constitutional Centennial is a notable occasion—a matter of world-wide observance and of history itself. The high honor of being its poet might well obtain the serious consideration of any American singer—if it should be tendered him.

Of all our living poets, Mr. Lowell is unquestionably *the first* to whom it should be offered, and I think he would rise to the

theme and occasion despite his recent sadness of view, and give the nation another ode (to quote from himself)

"Such as it had
In the ages glad,
Long ago."

As you perceive, there is no Southern poet of talent and repute equal to the office. Personally, I am floundering in various difficulties, and so worried by overdue literary engagements, that I shall hear with entire satisfaction of the selection of some other poet of good standing—as your choice. But I am profoundly grateful for the good opinion you still hold and have thus expressed, of me. And, if either the oration or the poem should fall to any member of the Class of 1853, the Class would have a right to expect him not to decline the chance of adding a new leaf to its laurels.

On October 19, 1900, President Hadley asked Mr. Stedman to write the poem for Yale's Bicentennial Celebration, "On the main day of the occasion, October 23, 1901, knowing how distinctly you are the man who represents Yale in the world of poetry, and how great has been the work which you have done for us in the past." In September, 1901, Mr. Stedman wrote, "Have just completed my Yale Bicentennial Poem—a most arduous job, but, I really think, performed as a poet (not a perfunctorian) should do it."

Professor James Herbert Morse in giving to us his memories of his friend Stedman, said: "His loyalty to Yale was as conspicuous then as it was on the day in 1901 when he received the highest honors his *alma mater* could bestow on a son. As an undercurrent in his thought, there was always, I imagine, a lingering regret that he had failed to take his degree in due course, and a feeling that spurred him on to make up for this failure in some way. The degrees out of course which came thickly in after years seemed to give him compensatory satisfaction, and he was happy in having earned them. It was many years later, when, in conversation at the Century, he told me of the unusual devotion he was paying to his Centennial Ode. This is indicated still more clearly in the following letter of October 30, 1901.

Both the occasion, the honor assigned to him, and the feeling that now at last he had 'made good,' and the dear old College would certainly forgive him for some degree of '*lèse majesté*' in his early days—all this was in his mood:"

It is fine to receive such a letter from a long-time associate, my brother poet and critic. It shall not wait, like far too many others of the daily mail, for tardy thanks. There is no other "maker," no scholar, believe me, from whom either appreciation or suggestion could come to me with more effectiveness.—Yes: I had for once the ideal audience for the best outgiving of which a speaker is capable. Never again, within your life or mine, can there be such an assemblage of scholars, philosophers, authors, statesmen, in one hall to give and receive honors, and to catch the strongest and the finest points of speech or song. It was an inspiring presence and occasion. I would you too had been there. As for me, I felt that at last I was "getting through Yale;" even delivering the "Valedictory" which I somehow missed-of forty-eight years ago.—I am deeply gratified that "Mater Coronata" has seemed to you worth your sympathy and critical regard. The opening of the third Book of "Paradise Lost," "Hyperion," or the Nativity Hymn would seem insignificant in daily newspaper type, but I hope ere long (as you assume) to set my poem before you in more effective form. Meanwhile I am struck by your liking for certain parts to which I myself "tak a notion"—the "swart Malay" stanza, for instance; though perhaps *I* have an equally sneaking regard for the allusion to Berkeley in the stanza which precedes it, and for the passage which I thought might especially appeal to a Grecian of the Grecians like yourself,—I mean the lines:

> Thine be it still the undying antique speech,
> The grove's high thought, the wing'd Hellenic lyre,

But in fact, I tried to have no *padding* in the entire poem. I more than once have composed as long a piece in a day; but this I rewrote as often as Gray copied his Elegy;—with the will to make it *both* Academic and poetic.

Now, as to the two suggestions which you make in the true artistic spirit. Let me say at once that, as you know from your own experience, there are things one can't get quite right—there is an

"unfinished window" always in Aladdin's palace—and you have struck on two points that I felt would seem wrong to some fine sense. "Feebling" is *not* a captured Dictionary word, and I am not *sure* that it is etymologically "sound," but it was a colloquial word in my youth, among the farmers and their kin, and I always thought it expressive—as concerns a puny child, or the runt of a litter. I *can* substitute "weakling," but hate to give up the alliteration with the "forlorn" and "fadeless" in succeeding lines. Think it over. As for "henchmen"—this word has been degraded to our New York ears, by its application to the Tammany "heelers" and the like. But you have perceived that my poem is purposely keyed to the diction and manner of the years following the Protectorate (with modifications) and I use "henchmen" in the not ignoble, English sense it bore—it is the exact word for the retainers, the servitors, of Science, who think of nothing but their fealty to exact Truth and to Duty. The rough breathing (the *H*) makes it a strong word. If you can give me another dissylable, I will thank you, and substitute it.

Well, the stanzaic form made the Poem what it is. The moment I chanced upon it, I said the thing was out of danger.

Finally, I have not written so much about anything of my own for years, as in this letter which your friendship has brought upon you, and I am not sorry thus to have a pretext for jotting it down.

The stately dignity and deep emotion of the *Mater Coronata* stanzas, combined with the metrical perfection, have made the poem famous:

> So rose our Academe since that far day
> When reverently the grave forefathers came,
> In council by the shoal ancestral bay,
> To speak the word,—to pray,—
> To found the enduring shrine without a name.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> No oracle betokened the obscure
> Grim years encountering which the elders bowed,
> Yet knew not faintness nor discomfiture,
> But set the buttress sure
> That should upstay these tabernacles proud;
>
> . . . . . .

No feebling she that reared them, no forlorn
And wrinkled mother lingering in the gray;
Fadeless she smiles to see her shield upborne:
It is her morn, her morn!
The past, but twilight ushering in her day.

. . . . . .

Thine be it still the undying antique speech,
The grove's high thought, the wing'd Hellenic lyre,
Unvexed of soul thy acolytes to teach,—
So shall they also reach
Their lamps, and light them at a quenchless fire;

And wield the trebly-welded English tongue,
Their vantage by inheritance divine,
Invincible the laurelled lists among
Wherein the bards have sung
Or sages deathless made the lettered line;

Till now, for that sure Pentecost to come,
The globe's four winds are winnowing apace
Fresh harvestings of speech, in one to sum
A world's curriculum
When East and West foregather face to face.

. . . . . .

Even as our Platonist's exultant soul
That westward course of empire visioned far,
Now round the sheen, to Asia and the Pole,
Time charts upon our scroll
The empearlêd pathways of an orient star.

. . . . . .

Time's drama speeds: albeit, alas! its chief
Protagonist, augmenter of the State,
Fell as the Prompter turned that unread leaf,—
And oh, what tragic grief
Just when consummate towered the action great!

. . . . . .

God dower her endowering her brood
With knowledge, beauty, valor, from her breast,—

Ingathering from the peopled town, the wood,
The island solitude,
The land's most loyal and its manfullest!

God keep her! Yea, that Soul her soul endure,—
That Spirit of the interstellar void,
That mightier Presence than the fathers knew,—
The source of light wherethrough
Heaven's planets shine in joy and strength deployed.

That Power,—even that which doth impart a share
And semblance of divinity to our kind,—
Hold thee, dear Mother, here and everywhere,—
Thee and thy sons,—in care,
Through centuries yet still loftier use to find!

To T. B. Aldrich.

Christmas, 1901.

Your explanation of your gloss (to use the scholiast's word) upon the accent of "Malay" gave me a small shiver, since I wished to have the "Mater Coronata" technically perfect, and had, as you know, put it into its final and unchangeable form within its book-covers. Yale has it in that form, and the manuscript from which it was recited, and has stored them in the archives for resurrection in A. D. 2001. Our descendants will then, I grieve to say, refer authoritatively to my text for the pronunciation of Malay current at the outset of the Twentieth Century! Such is, and will be, the uncertainty of scriptural evidence. No wonder that Raleigh burned his History of the World.

I find that the *early* "Webster" gave *Ma'lay*—accent on the first syllable. Such was the pronunciation of the seafaring folk about Norwich and New London in my youth, and I must confess that for once I neglected to "verify" it in my age—to make sure, as is my wont, of the accents of a proper noun. The moment your second letter came I thought of Cath'ay and other words, and felt in my bones that you were right. The *late* "Webster," the "Century," etc., all confirm your belief—and of course you, who have been in Malayan waters, also are "authoritative." Well, this is "one on me!" Yet I have no doubt that any sailor to-day, along the docks, if asked concerning a fellow from Malacca, would

say—"O, he's one of them Ma'lays."—This will always be my one fly in the Bicentennial ointment, and it is too late to pick it out.

From many congratulating letters concerning "Mater Coronata," a few excerpts may be repeated:

"It was truly the *Crown of Yale*, put on by your hand at her great festival. A University can achieve no greater success than to be mother of a poet," wrote Henry van Dyke.

Supreme Court Justice David J. Brewer said, "Every time I read it, it seems more impressive, more worthy of the great occasion. Such has been also the pleasant experience of others. It is so strong and suggestive."

"It made me wish," wrote T. W. Higginson, "that the inquiry made by an English clergyman of my daughter could be answered in the affirmative—'Are Harvard and Yale *both* in Boston?'"

Professor Goodell added: "It is of the nature of a real poem, you know, that it requires a little time to create its own atmosphere and perspective before its true proportions are clearly seen. I have now read your "Mater Coronata" at intervals many times, and each time with a rising estimate. The Latin title, form of stanza, the close-packed thought, the largeness of view, the austere beauty of experience, are all in noble harmony with each other and with what is highest and most characteristic in our 'strong Mother' past and present."

Hamilton W. Mabie's words are: "You have interpreted the occasion not only to the mind, but to the eye of posterity."

And Howells, lately, sent these words: "There was one other notable occasion on which I saw your grandfather and that was at Yale, when we all got our degrees, and he read a poem. And he read it splendidly, too, with great and tremulous emotion. I don't know that I ever heard a man read poetry with so much passion and so much intensity."

"Hymn of the West" was written as the official hymn of

the World's Fair, St. Louis, Missouri, 1904. "I have been struggling," says the poet to his friend R. W. Gilder, "with the St. Louis Hymn, and have longed for your aid in certain spots. These musicians wish to knock all the poetry out of one's rhythm! Have been obliged to decline the English Lit. Section of the International Congress. Thus it is to be 70, and *not* '70 young.'" The character and merits of "Hymn of the West" were closely moulded by the necessity of adapting it to music, both instrumental and choral. In conjunction with the distinguished composer Professor J. K. Paine—*par nobile fratrum*—the art-work was beaten and fused to unity. The letters of the two artists during this time form an interesting and valuable study, but for experts only.

The 1891 Yale Psi-U choral set to music by Professor Harrington, and the Ode for Commencement Day, 1895, Yale University, the music by Horatio W. Parker, suggest a similar thought. For the latter his classmates sent Stedman $300. as a tribute, to be put in what form he preferred. He returned the money, to be used as a Yale prize for writing.

Upon many friendly occasions, Stedman contributed in verse: to Holmes—in "Le Jour du Rossignol," 1879,—

> Whose swift wit like his, with which none dares to vie,
> Whose carol so instant, so joyous and true?
> Sound it cheerly, dear Holmes, for the sun is still high,
> And we're glad, as he halts, to be out-sung by you.

And ten years later, on Holmes's eightieth Birthday,—

> Grateful, he gave his dearest child her name,
> Lit the shrewd East with laughter, love, and tears,—

In 1905, at the death of John Hay,—

> The poet-statesman's, in whose thought
> Self had no place since first he shared
> The work his boyhood's chieftain wrought,
> The faith which life nor substance spared?
> . . . . . .

Even so, a white star on his crest,
We knew him in his stainless youth;
Even so—not else than loyalest—
The world his manhood learned in sooth;

And if there be—and if there be
A realm where lives still forward roll,
Even so—no other—strong and free
Through time and space shine on, dear Soul!

To Henry M. Alden, on his 70th Birthday Dinner, 1906,—

For am I not of them who, down the years
Now closed in Life's inexorable journal,
Have known your hand's strong grip that time endears,
Your words fraternal?

Yet knew you best, and last, from golden books,
The rare quintessence of your mystic spirit,—
When *that* through mortal eyes no longer looks
May mine be near it!

And this toast to Dr. Henry van Dyke, at the Lotus Club Dinner, 1904,—

Health to the poet, scholar, wit, divine,
In whom sweet Nature would all gifts combine
To make us hang upon his lips and say—
The Admirable Crichton of our day,
Whose quill and lute and voice are weapons shear
That quite outvie that gallant's swift rapier—
Whose dulcet English, from its font that wells
This night, the Scotsman's dozen tongues excels!
Long may he live, to wear the cloistral gown,
Or from his Little Rivers bring to town—
From every haunt where purling waters flow—
The mystic flower that only votaries know!
Wouldst view what Nature's portraiture is like?
The Dame herself hath sat to this van Dyke.

Which brought this answer from the guest of the evening:

No other Christmas card can compare with your letter and the poem in your own hand on the Mikado's paper,—and the touch

STEDMAN IN 1879
Photograph by Mora

of yourself at the end of the writing, with the brave heart undaunted and full of gifts to bestow on the world! Now I am enriched,—go by, old year, with my thanks for this last kindness: and come, new year, with a chance to deserve it better.

Do you remember what St. Paul says? "I would that they were cut off which trouble you." Your "public duty," dear poet, is to live, and to write out of your heart the things that are pure and lovely and of good report, and to go on being what you have been for so many years, a maker and interpreter of the literature which deepens and purifies the joy of living for more even than you know.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FRIEND OF POETS

To John Greenleaf Whittier.

December 18, 1890.

My dear—my beloved—Mr. Whittier:

On this afternoon of the day when my mother *would* have been 80 years old, I came home fatigued and sad, not knowing that you had provided for me the keenest pleasure I now have experienced for many a day—and certainly the highest honor that has come to me at any time. When Laura, my wife, handed me the copy of "Sundown," I saw tears in her eyes and a smile on her face. I am not ashamed to confess that before I had finished reading the exquisite inscription to E. C. S., and what with weakness and surprise and gratitude and a rush of tender feelings, I was myself crying like a child.

Indeed, I have grown old without having time to realize it or to outgrow the selfsame thoughts with respect to you and your work that I had when a youth in New England. *You have put your hands upon my head and blessed me.* No other hands, no other blessing, can be so dear to me—though other blessings come where one like yours has fallen.

No poet older than myself, except Bayard Taylor, has ever understood me as you have—or said to me such words as you have said from time to time. Perhaps my own lack of such warmth *from above* has made me a little the more thoughtful of those still younger who care for a word even from me. I think your voluntary letter some years ago, when I wrote the Concord poem, was worth more to me than any words I ever heard before. But as for this crowning grace—I can only send you these broken expressions of an over-full heart. I am simply touched beyond words.

I made it rather a point, dear Mr. Whittier, not to write you on your birthday. I feared you would feel moved to answer me, and I knew *you* would know that your 83d. anniversary was remembered in *my* house. Little did I think how you had borne

me in your heart and mind. Stay with us yet, is the prayer to-night of

Your grateful and attached friend,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

The words of dedicatory blessing are these:

TO
E. C. S.

Poet and friend of poets, if thy glass
Detects no flower in winter's tuft of grass,
Let this slight token of the debt I owe
Outlive for thee December's frozen day,
And, like the Arbutus budding under snow,
Take bloom and fragrance from some morn of May
When he who gives it shall have gone the way
Where faith shall see and reverent trust shall know.

To find a first instance of Stedman's friendship and sympathy for fellow poets, we must go back to the schooldays at Norwich Town, Connecticut, when the lad who roved the hillside reading Keats and Shelley was glad to aid a mate who had poetic aspirations. This story was repeated throughout his life: in college days; when he was a young editor eager to share his ability with others,—more to encourage them to find their own genius; through the perilous hours when war held the country,—even at that period his literary aid and advice were sought by friends on the battle-field; in the happy hours of comradeship during the old New York days, when Taylor, Stoddard, Boker, he, and others of their band, used to foregather and criticise the work of one another. So on, down through the years until the morning of his death. In his letters, in his diaries, there is perhaps not a single day when his bounteous friendly nature did not go out to some fellow-singer. Perhaps it was by examining a manuscript; or in using his discriminating and cautious influence in bringing together an author and publisher who were, or should have been, waiting for each other; again, in securing a correspondence with some good journal in England or

America, for an author, whom he felt worthy of the place—for Stedman's conscience guided his enthusiastic heart;—another time, in aiding some guest from England or the Continent to secure a lectureship, or an audience. Would-be professors frequently sought and gained his help in obtaining desired positions in Universities. For such a candidate, although utterly fagged, he wrote one evening seven letters. In 1883, when he was in terrible distress, he turned from his own grief to help an old friend by long advisory letters—because, he "felt so sorry for him." When one woman poet was in affliction, he wrote more than forty letters in her behalf. To many, he sent similar words as, "If you are in trouble let me know, for it would grieve me if you did not, poor child." In his diary, such an entry as the following is frequent:

> Charles Warren Stoddard, the California poet, dined with us. Lonesome and hard up. Is a Catholic and talked of taking orders. Cheered him up, and must get him some money.
>
> Found time to see the *Scribner* people in behalf of Warren Stoddard. Offered to guarantee by my own work, if they would advance him $200. for articles.

It was to be expected that his unfailing kindness of heart would be imposed upon, and the singular requests asked of him afford unusual reading.

In many little ways, his genuine interest in authors is shown. In a copy of "A Duet" by Harrison S. Morris and J. Arthur Henry is written, "I'll save this little thing and see what these in fact Arcadians will come to."

It hurt him not to meet any request: as his years increased this had more often to be the case. Early in his manhood he wrote many reviews of books; these lessened with his strength. In the closing years, after severe illnesses, he could no longer examine manuscripts, but if a promising poem or story *did* reach his eye, the old zest returned to see how he could better the manuscript or help the author. The poems of one young man caught the interest of a secretary, who placed them on

Mr. Stedman's table. Coming home late that night, Mr. Stedman glanced at the poems; then he read them through. The first act the next morning was to telegraph for the young author, and, for a long gentle Summer afternoon, the two, discussing books and poets, while the older poet, with boyish enthusiasm, showed the younger man his treasures, were certainly in Arcady.

It was always difficult for him to withstand any financial appeal from an author—though he scorned those who would not go into business because they considered that they had a vocation for art. A little instance of his kindness is this: One Thanksgiving Day, as his guests were about to sit down to dinner, Mr. Stedman received a note from a young writer saying that his wife and children were starving. With his own hands, Mr. Stedman packed a basket of food, dispatching it, and a check, to the needy family, before he himself would eat a mouthful.

He has been called the "Father Confessor" of the younger poets,—hundreds of letters of peculiar confidence sustain this title. Workers in all the arts have contributed to this series; painters, sculptors, musicians have testified that Stedman's encouragement braced them to strive harder. It is not out of the order of things that his heart warmed most tenderly to poets; also, because it was his nature to help the one most in need. In witness of this are words of his own:

> The *Evening Post* to-night, has an article deploring American neglect of our own novelists—but says nothing of the struggle, slights, neglect, of our New York *poets* and essayists.
>
> The novelists have not been neglected, on the whole. They have received praise and money equal to their deserts, and the poets, who are also reviewers, have helped them to succeed. But who have helped the poets?

To show messages of gratitude from authors and poets: "You have been one, if not the greatest of my intellectual friends. In the entire suppression of any recognition you have held to some faith in me," says Mrs. Stoddard.

In 1875, Constance F. Woolson writes: "I believe I have told you 'all about myself,' at some length. It is one of your delightful habits to show real interest in other people's work. I remember how steadily and yet how quietly you kept the conversation on my affairs and myself that day on the sea-wall, and that evening on the beach."

And Louise C. Moulton: "All my grown-up life—ever since you were good to my book, written when only eighteen years of age—you have been my dear friend, dearer and ever dearer as the years speed on. . . . It is the simple truth that no one was ever so good to me before."

"I owe you everything," wrote Henry Harland.

Concerning her poet-son Richard Hovey, Mrs. Hovey says:

We all feel under lasting obligations to you for your many kindnesses to "our boy" without which he could not have secured a publisher, and we hope that in the near future he may produce work that will merit your approval to a greater degree than has this, his first effort. He is young and ambitious, diffident yet strong in his purpose to do his best with the talents God has given him. In this work he knows his father and mother will always stand behind him to encourage and strengthen, and yet your friendship and counsel stand out before him as a tower of strength and your example is one for him to follow. Some years ago I published a poem, called "Exile." I sent it to you at that time, and your reply, so helpful and generous, has been to me one of the events of my life that I care most to remember.

Such a message was indeed gratifying to Stedman. And another in 1878, was from Paul H. Hayne:

Honestly, without the shadow even, of anything resembling an *arrière pensée*, I have previously told you in what *exalted* estimation I hold your critical powers;—especially when brought to the elucidation of Poetry, and therefore it is but natural that your praise of "Unveiled," and the "Simms Monody," should be esteemed by me a bright and lofty feather in my literary cap!

Far above this commendation, however invaluable and precious as it is, do I prize the *genial and generous spirit* of your letter. O! if all literary men were only like *you*, in breadth of views, and Catholicity of temperament! If they would only cultivate *your*

noble *esprit de corps*, which urges one to recognize a brother or sister in Art, everywhere, and at all seasons!

But such appreciative cordiality can never, I fear, become universal, until the dawn of some Æsthetic Millenium, far removed from us in the realm of an ideal, indefinite Future! On that very account, its manifestations, here and there, the occasional ring of the true heart metal, preluding a worthier, and more harmonious Time, must possess for us an exceptional and lovely significance. At all events, it is *thus* with *me!*

James Whitcomb Riley says: "No less great the master's heart than art, as of a truth I have most preciously been made aware."

From Helen Gray Cone.

October 30, 1897.

How shall I thank you for your kind letter? I feel that I can say with the Greek soldier, "Pericles smiled on me." Such words as yours are a golden cordial to me, in the somewhat isolated life I lead—a life full of the happy activities of the teacher, but necessarily rather apart from my song-companions.

The poem you praise so richly came straight from my heart. It is now the dearer, since it has found its way to yours.

A friend of Norwich Town writes in 1907: "I am sending to you a copy of my little memoir of my grandfather, Daniel Lathrop Coit, which wouldn't have seen daylight but for your kind suggestion."

Says Anna Bowman Dodd: "You are too generous to all workers and artists not to be willing to lend something of yourself to every honest effort." And Bliss Carman: "I wonder if you know how warmly all of the fellows whom I am most associated with admire you. . . . Don't be sick! Be well, and keep us encouraged still."

One August day, Rose Lathrop, the daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, wrote:

It is not the Kings who send us away empty-handed, as your letter proves, which gave me so much happiness in responding to my book of verses as if they were poems; and convincing me by doing so, that there is something of the poet in me.

In looking back over ever so many years I remember when and where you have shone out of much mist and gloom, and it does not seem possible that anyone but yourself can be so immortally bright, kind and tireless. That you should have stooped to shine towards me once more, you must believe me I am glad.

When publishing her "The Flowers and Ferns in their Haunts," Mabel Osgood Wright said: "Seven years ago you guided me into the paths of authorship by encouraging me to gather some rural essays into a little book—my first. Now I venture to hope that this more ambitious record of out-door life may please."

And that one, whose genius Stedman profoundly respected —Mrs. Elizabeth Stoddard, when her old friend had secured the republication of her novels:

I may have vanity, but I know I have feeling for I am *crying, crying*. Your note has just come with its most unexpected news— Where is that Second angel Dunham? Dick is deeply gratified he will tell you.

The thought comes—should it be a failure?—then I shall suffer for him, Lorry and you—I never told you how anxious Lorry has been in the matter. Dick has kissed me, and scolded me for being moved—how can I help it? Perhaps in shadowy days I can do something for you—it can only be from my heart.

Whether by spontaneous suggestion, or in seconding the movement of others, he was always eager and foremost in bringing to friends public recognition for valuable services, by the means of dinners, receptions, and testimonials; or in helping them to become members of his clubs. In the evening of their life, that picturesque couple, Richard Henry Stoddard and his wife Elizabeth clung to Stedman, who was their champion and forgiving friend. It was a rare satisfaction to Stedman to see the man whose original kindness in 1859 he had never forgotten, honored, in 1897, by a dinner on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. This message of appreciation expressed by Mr. Stoddard was precious to the younger man!

I have no words with which to tell you how deeply I feel your kindness to me, and how greatly I admired your address at the Savoy, I mean as a piece of pure literature, its tact, its judgment, and its generosity. You are the only man of all my friends who had a right to introduce me to the great company of gentlemen who honored me by being present. You had the right, and whatever honors came to me belong to you as well, and as fully as to me.

I was afraid of breaking down, but your coolness helped me, with my pride, and I managed not to forget my verse.

I am more dazed now than I was then, and I ought to be for there never was so much kindness and respect shown any penman by his brothers of the craft.

Thanks to them; but *love* to you. I can't write much, as you see, but I feel.

In a bookcase by themselves, Stedman used to keep a collection of volumes; two or three score there were, dedicated to him by those who were grateful for his kindness. He was never more deeply moved than by Whittier's dedication. "I have Love, if nothing else,—it pays for all beside," he could well say. And again:

> Whoso conquers the earth,
> Winning its riches and fame,
> Comes to the evening at last,
> The sunset of seventy years,
> Confessing that Love was real
> All the rest was a dream!

A dedicated volume bearing an early year is "Poems in Sunshine and Firelight," 1866, by J. J. Piatt: the inscription reads:

TO

E. C. S.

I Dedicate This Book, Dear Friend, To You—
Knowing your other friends, a host unspoken,
Will say: "To one so bright, so warm, so true,
Our hearts should bear how many a worthier token!"

J. J. P.

And long years after, another friend wrote this dedication to "A Wreath of Laurel":

TO

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

WHOSE FINE GENIUS AND EXQUISITE ART
HAVE ILLUMINED AND ADORNED
MORE THAN FORTY YEARS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

WITH HONOR FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENT
WITH GRATITUDE FOR HIS EXAMPLE
AND WITH AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF HIS LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP

WILLIAM WINTER

July 15, 1898

To Stedman's thanks, Winter replied:

Your kindness toward me greatly over-rates the value of my Dedication. Such tributes as mine to you are, I think, chiefly significant, not to the recipient but to the giver. The reader will think better of *my writings* when he knows that *you* like them, and, when he learns that you have long been my friend, he will think far better of *me:* and, although I have never courted the multitude, nor cared for popular applause, I am not indifferent, when now I have entered on the bleak and lonely fifth act of Life, to the good-will of thoughtful and gentle persons. I should be better satisfied if my book were better worth your acceptance and the association with your honored name. I am much gratified with what you say, and I am particularly pleased to hear that my tribute to the memory of Bromley has met with the approval of his friends. I did not know that it had even attracted a passing attention. I honored Bromley and had a most affectionate regard for him. He was one of the *true* hearts. He was incapable of falsehood or meanness, he always meant to be right, he scorned imposture, and he never decked himself with the feathers of pretension. The loss of such a man leaves a void in life that never can be filled. His ability was exceptional.

Inserted in Laurence Hutton's private copy of "Literary Landmarks of Rome" was this letter from Stedman:

Nothing has brightened, of late, the twilight of my work-a-day life, quite so much as the generous and felicitous dedication of your "Literary Landmarks of Rome" to me—your most affectionate friend. 'Tis an honor, indeed, when a man like you, in the fulness of his well-earned repute, and one who is "most select," though "generous," in his choice of comrades, awards me such a tribute; 'tis far different from the dedications given by neophytes anxious for the success of their first ventures. As to your personal reminiscence, who wouldn't be glad to stand in my shoes—

"Proud to be first of *your* Landmarks,
Linked with this noble line
Reaching from Thames to Tiber,
From Craig to the Appenine?"

Yes, indeed my dear Laurie, I am delighted to be chosen sponsor for the latest of your fascinating volumes,—and may it not be the last! If possible, you make me more than ever affectionately yours.

To Henry Harland, Stedman wrote:

A genuine surprise, and one that touches my heart. I have small claims to being your "Pumblechook," and never shall enter any; but I certainly have no ground for setting up Mr. O.'s immortal wail over the ingratitude of foster-children.

Indeed, my dear fellow, you pay me the truest and highest compliment within your power, by this charming dedication of your third and most careful book to E. C. S. For an author's Third Book—when he has made such victories as your First and Second have been—is like the third o'ertopping billow of the surf, fringed with foam-blossomed festoons of fame! (That last phrase is *not* by Swinburne, though "by your looks you would say so.")

'Tis long since my poor counsel and encouragement were needed for your vigorous work: you were a success, as authorship now goes, with your first novel. But 'tis none the less cheery to receive this token of your respect and attachment. And so be assured again that I am quite delighted with it.

To illustrate some of the phases of Friendship's givings and receivings, we let the following letters, or excerpts from letters, speak:

To Francis Bellamy.

November 23, 1901.

You ask me—"How did you learn to write?" To which I reply, "By the natural method," and thus make the answer as direct as the question, and two words shorter. It is truthful, withal, if I understand the meaning of "natural," as used by certain teachers of the modern languages.

People sometimes ask how they shall acquire "culture." I have gone as far as to say that one must be "born cultured,"—that taste, fineness of temper, and bearing, and the like, must be congenital, as preliminaries to any acquisition. Just so with the art of writing. In spite of the industrial theory of genius, one must have the inbred turn for scriptural expression, else he never will become anything but a made writer. Many do learn to write more or less successfully by sheer application and will-power, but to my mind their product is inessential. They are of a class with skilled but not gifted musicians, whose best service is that of imparting to the born artist technical knowledge, the accumulation of the past, to discover which for himself would absorb a lifetime.

There is not a masterly writer living who in early years could have been kept away from books, and from the *materia* of his craft, by authority or by any circumstance short of prostration or imprisonment. The richest training, the most insensate ambition, alone could not have made him what he is. Yet the natural writer can scarcely have too apt and thorough a training. Here it occurs to me that you simply asked this respondent how *he* learned to write. To tell the truth, I was kept back years, in respect of style and accuracy, by rushing into work without sufficient equipment and in a time of loose writing,—by having had no advantages beyond, in my earlier 'teens, the first half of a neglected college course. In some way I did get hold of the great books, and of those to which I was led, like any youth, plant, or animal, by an instinct for just the pabulum that suited my special needs. In this matter a natural writer, since books are everywhere, has advantages over the young musician or student of design. Otherwise I have been self-trained, too isolated from fellow-workmen,

and forced to write at intervals so far apart that half of each has been used to "get one's hand in," as in the case of a pianist out of practice. The vision of a consecutive period devoted chiefly to letters has been the Flying Dutchman of my busy years. Such is my frank confession. I do not claim to deserve absolution. Probably everyone does about as much as he was born to do; and doubtless a lack of the contempt for feeling, "duty," and convention, of the sublime egoism, displayed by a Palissy (for instance) is by so much a lack of compulsive genius.

To Miss ————

There are touches of feeling in your three poems, and delicate fancies in "Stray Thoughts"—but you have much to learn, if you wish to do justice to your poetic nature by really good and artistic expression. Master the *technical drudgery* of the art; avoid the "*dash*"—learn *precisely* what punctuation to substitute for it where the "dash" is not needed; do not mix up your didactic "moral" with your poetry—as at the end of the harebell or edelweiss lyric,—the lesson must be conveyed otherwise. Learn the *secrets* of blank-verse, if you must write it.

Poetry cannot *often* be written in a slipshod way, not even by the greatest genius. I am glad you read the best masters—Dante, Ruskin, etc.

To G. E. Montgomery.

February 8, 1878.

A day or two since I received and read your letter in the *Mail*. Of which more anon. Coming home from the country to-night, I am glad to find your note, with the poems. During the past year my few writing hours have been so largely taken up with matters connected with other authors,—and with those general literary interests "centering" here, which lie so near my heart,—that I've had neither time nor strength for creative or critical work of my own. And my years fly swiftly by, of late! So I had vowed to write no more to younger authors, but you touch and interest me; you are earnest and have the rare and true art-feeling. In you I seem to see myself at your age—for I, too, began to write with a *real purpose*, and an inborn love of beauty, very young, at sixteen, and found no one who believed or wrote as I did. And so I am going to make this one more exception, in your case. Moreover,

as my impulse will be gone to-morrow and only the purpose remain—a new burden—I will write to-night, when it has not been so long a purpose as to require an effort.

Several of these poems I have read before. They all have meaning, and have a relation to one another. This I see. I also see, easily, and at once, that you have all the ear, the sense of rhythm and of feeling, and enough of imagination, to prove you a born poet. Now to how few have I been able to say this, since I was able again to begin to sing—at the age of 28, after my enforced silence of eight years! I have seen many young aspirants rise, and all but five or six quickly fall. Their notes were not true; their art-sense wrong; their purpose selfish and superficial. They copied authors who themselves got their cues "at third-hand." In coming after a long interregnum you have an open field, and a grand advantage. And I say you are unusually well-equipped. I hope for a noble future for you, and if you do not have it—'twill be partly your own fault, and, of course, partly not your fault.

Now I see very plainly the animating *motif* of all your verse; a distinct sense of the transition, pending, from the mode of poetry inspired by, and availing itself of, fable and "phenomena" to that of poetry inspired and helped by the new light, the truer and more glorious truths, of later day discovery. But every noble young mind, catching the leading thought of its era, at first thinks itself the sole or chief possessor and expounder of this thought. And this especially, because, while conversant with classical and famous works, and with the contemporary and latest works, it rarely is acquainted with works and thought *just preceding* its own beginnings. What I prize in you, and in your poems, is not your immediate propagandism—good as that may be,—but your purity, your *aspiration*, your *poetic gift*, and, (I believe) your capacity for *growth and change*. My heart warms to these things, which I read in your face and between your lines. Now I have discovered one thing about art. It is not so much the material used, or the mission, as the *quality* of the workman and the gift perfected in his work. Only a poor artist, a false workman, blames his tools or his subject, or his material. Another thing. An artist must lay hold of the universal mind—the cultured *and* the commoners. To do this, he often must write *objectively;* not expressing his own feelings, his favorite intellectual vision or dream, but often taking a dramatic or lyrical or idyllic theme, quite outside of himself,

and handling it—as the great masters have done—so as to charm, win, and subdue. For the world cares little for any subjectivity but the greatest. Shelley, the prince of subjective idealists wrote his loveliest and most mature poems, upon objective themes. Swinburne, his successor in our time, with even more *advanced* (I do not say more innately noble) rhythmical equipment, has to hold the public by objective work, now that the ear is no longer surprised by, but has become wonted to, his marvellous verse. No one can exceed him in rhythm and power of language, and what is fine in him would be insufferable in another. The world will not stand more than one *of his kind.* Hence a return to an almost Doric simplicity and majesty, or purity of tone, will be a new poet's strongest hold; and the use of dramatic or narrative themes. And, mind you, the new and coming method, so dear to you, can be applied and exemplified just as well in one kind of song as in another. So I would not continue too long to write poems *supporting your idea* or in the same key; but get the "free-hand" and range; vary your utterances and experiments; and ere long, you will find exactly where you are a natural maëstro, and will compel the hearing that alone can carry your points. *This much for your poetic chances and career.* I do not say this, look you, with any of the airs and rights of an older man: but as I would say it to one of my own age, or to an elder. There is no "majority" in art. All ages are equal, though different. I stand between the elders and the youngers; between the past and the future; and can honestly say *Tros, Tyriusque, mihi nullo discrimine agetur.* I doubt if I have fully or adequately expressed my meanings. These are scattered hints, such as a music-teacher, granting that he has *no* genius, might give a pupil far his superior—because the teacher might have learned from long experience what a brilliant genius would have to grope in order to find out clearly for himself. And if I could have met with such an one, when I was 20, it would have helped me! But there was no mind in sympathy with my own at that time. At all events, save this letter with your early poems, and read it ten years from now—when my lute shall be broken possibly, or out of tune—and you may see something in it which does not strike you now.

I am closing up all my correspondence, and henceforth can write no journalistic criticisms; but these words are far more honest and affectionate than any light newspaper puff could be. And nothing

but your own good work can *in the end* confirm your position. No matter who hates, or who helps an artist, in the long run, his *product* and his *continued productions* alone will help him. This is a trite saying, but most trite sayings one learns in time to be *true*, and wonders that he didn't see the force of them! I shall watch your course—you could never have a better period or fairer chance, than the one which the past 20 years have prepared for you.

Now as to the *Mail* letter. Of course, it interested me, but I am now going to test your temper. I don't think you are really aware of the number of years during which the ideas in it have been making themselves felt among *thinking* poets and artists. The books you mention are all comparatively recent. "Poetry of the Future" was a term in common use ten years ago, in England, and I have brought over from Summit a book by Austin in which a chapter has that heading. But it is not used in your sense of it. You will find the term in the *Index* to my "Vict. Poets," under the head of "Poetry" (page 433). Since you speak so pleasantly of the book, and I wish to give you something by way of "taking salt together," let me ask you to accept my own copy of the last edition. (I have no fresh copy on hand.) In it I will venture to mark the passages embodying my own discussion of the term you reject—"The Relations between Poetry and Science." But by this I explain that I mean their bearing upon each other now and in the future. You will observe that these passages cover almost every minute point made in your letter and also by the authors whom you quote. Prof. Shairp well knows my book. He is in it. It was published in England, and these ideas, *which I thought out in consequence of my own experience as a poet*, years ago, were at once widely discussed there and in America. The 1st chapter of the "V. P." was printed in *Scribner's*, under another title, in 1872 or 1873; but written, *mostly*, two years earlier.—I am glad to see one young poet arising, who also understands the present and looks to the future. But again, remember that, as an apple ripens best in *its own good time*, so a new imaginative method must come of itself and naturally. Fourier had a great idea, in socialism; he erred in trying to establish phalansteries before the world was so crowded, etc., that they would come of themselves. Evolution is the thing. So your poetry can only exemplify your theory of the ultimate, by degrees and degrees.

One word more. I wonder if you have read much of the best old poetry, before the transition-period began. Milton is talked about, not read; yet he was Keats's master, and Tennyson's—especially in his minor poems. And the old dramatists and lyrists sung *naturally* and represented *their* age—a truly poetical one. And Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, had free hands. And so had Æschylus and Sophocles and Goethe. And neither you nor I, nor Swinburne, could have been possible unless such men *had* been.

Stoddard's "Book of the East" is a mixture, not the thing to judge him by. I have brought out a book, "Songs of Summer," written in *1857* (!), expressly for Fawcett to read, and he shall lend it to you. If you could know the Bœotian Darkness of that time you would consider such a book from a man then as young, as fresh, as earnest, as either of you, a marvel, and curse the generation that allowed him to starve. Look at the short lyrics, and at "The Fisher and Charon," and remember the namby-pamby period in which the latter noble piece was written, and then measure it at its worth. . . . There is some grotesque and thin work in the "Book of the East"; but if I remember rightly there is much fine imagination in the poem on Shakespeare, and in one on Bryant. And Aldrich and Fawcett altogether underrate the Lincoln Ode, after the manner of Marvell.

Were you forty I should have made this letter in three lines; but as it is my only one to you, and as I want you to understand that age and reputation never count between poets, it has occupied my ante-midnight hour. The poets *here*, who have "the root of the matter in them," who have the real gift, whether their song be contralto, baritone, tenor, or bass, must work together. And the best of them, if young, will find (and the oldest will confess) that there is nothing which in the end has served him better than the comrade-spirit, the brotherhood of those nurtured at the perfect breasts of our beautiful Mother Art.

Take these opinions from separate letters:

You are thoroughly right in trying Homer on the youngsters. *Epic song* belongs to the youth of nations, and delights the youth of men. It is the one thing wanting in our own literature. We began where others end.

Science anyhow has more effect nowadays upon my imagination than most of the poetry which is written. I wish I were a zoölogist and not a wretched taster of doubtful metrical teas.

It is not that we don't have poets—but that the press and public don't read poetry, and they scarcely know what it is.

When young I best loved to write in a simply poetical way,—romantic theme and measure—like this, but haven't done so for many years. It seems to me, and doubtless will to you, that the poem ends too abruptly. Something might have been said of the subsequent fame and long life of the Abbess.[1] But the faculty seems to grow upon me of telling a story in the briefest and simplest language, and the story really having ended I'd nothing more to say.

To Kate Field.

Naturally, after an evening with your letters, and reading to-night your *Tribune* works, I have been musing with regard to its author and your hint that you had half a mind to write a play. Why not make the half a whole, and do it? I really don't believe that you can do anything else so well (unless it be to win friends at sight). The fact is that your education and career have been nomadic and versatile,—you have coquetted, and something more, with literature, art, lecturing, criticism, etc.; but if you love one thing more than another it is, possibly, the stage, both from early associations and instinct. Now I don't know any woman who has your peculiar gifts and advantages as a dramatist. You are a writer, to begin with, with sentiment, culture, wit, sensibility. More than this, you know the stage, its effects, limitations, and requirements. Lastly, you have natural dramatic instinct. Write a play in prose, close, sharp, epigrammatic, sparkling, but with scenes and passages of real tenderness, pathos, passion. If the period is far in the past, the story may be either foreign or American; but if in the present, American by all odds. You will succeed, and such a work in hand will give *point* to your ambition, and you will be happy while engaged upon it. But write it *as an artist;* that is, quit society for a time, throw your whole heart into your work, let it absorb you to a certain extent, do it for the love

[1] "Sister Beatrice."

of it. It is too late for you to go on the stage, and for you to stoop to pass through the several grades of promotion—is it not? These few words come wholly from my desire to see your fine temperament developed by an adequate task. You will succeed, if you try honestly. Don't think that giving advice is the ordinary habit of your friend. . . .

To Louise C. Moulton.

March 25, 1873.

I have this evening given all your lyrics a very careful reading, and will tell you exactly what I think about them—feeling sure that you will not treat me as the Archbishop served Gil Blas.

They are of unequal merit and are easily classified into those written before your character and poetic purpose were fully developed, and those which are the product of your later and best years. My own feeling is that the last few years of regular journalism have advanced you in every way—and given form and balance to your mental structure. Some of your poems seem to have a definite intent—others, to have been composed simply because you felt music within you, and must write *something*—not knowing exactly *what*. For example—the poems entitled "How Long," "To My Heart," "Andrew," "The Singer," "A Problem," "Question," "Through a Window" and "At the Last," are fairly worthy of you, and pieces which you will always be pleased with in the future. In a *less* degree this is true of "May Flowers," "Alien Waters," "Next Year," "What She said on Her Tomb," "A Song in the Wood," "Love's Hand," "Out in the Snow," and "A Weed." But the *others* are not up, it seems to me, to the standard you can now attain with ease—though it will of course, be almost impossible for you to perceive this, because they have so long been familiar to you. (I find this so in my own case.) The chief defect in some of these poems is a limited range of descriptive adjectives and limited *variety* of musical thoughts and cadences. Their chief beauty lies in their naturalness, artlessness, simplicity, depth of feeling.

I see few verbal lapses to criticize. In the poem "On the Shore," should you not say "Neither wind, *nor* ocean, *nor* bird"?

In "Alien Waters," and one of the other pieces, occurs the rhyme "morning—dawning" for which, as a Yankee, I was once justly held up to scorn by a reviewer. In "Waiting" why not substitute

"return" (or something else) for "come back" in the 2d stanza? As a general thing your language is correct and rhythm melodious.

In fine: I believe a volume containing all these poems would be kindly received, and do you no hurt, but would not *add* to your reputation. Should you wait until you have a dozen more as good as the best—*each containing a distinct theme or purpose*—a volume *would* add to your reputation. It might sell just as largely in the one case as in the other. Whatever you conclude to do will have the brotherly good wishes and coöperation of your friend.

In the classification made I take into view the various qualities of purpose, art, melody, freshness, etc.—For instance, in "A Problem," the light, graceful humor is well preserved throughout—making it a better *poem* than some of graver pretence.

To R. W. Gilder.

September 6, 1873.

You need no praise, for the man who can write such pure poetry is a law unto himself. You know that hitherto, whenever I have said anything encouraging to you (you have perhaps sometimes been encouraged by my sympathy, at least) I have not failed to mingle it with technical criticism, if I saw the slightest cause. Nothing of the latter can enter into my present note, for, to save my life, I can find nothing to "criticize" in this exquisite page of verse. At last you are writing flawlessly, and have shown the soul of an artist in perfecting yourself and biding your time. Certainly no American ever has written six consecutive Love Sonnets to compare with these. They give me great delight, and will delight every poet who reads them. They are wholly your own, by that shade of difference—your own personal *flavor*—which makes them unlike the work of your masters: Petrarch, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti, etc. I wish I might have written them. Some fortunate coincidences of art, study, youth, being a poet and *being in love*, have come together to produce them,—and neither I, nor any other poet, can equal them. I especially like the 3rd, 5th and 6th. The last two in structure (which I have minutely examined), thought, and imagination, are *superb*. And what I particularly am gratified with, is that you are rejecting now the oddity and obscurity I have sometimes "cried out" at with regard to some of your verse.

You don't need any factitious help of that sort, as I have always told you, and this beautiful poetry proves it.

From ——— October 30, 1873.

I have no book to offer thee, my friend,
In meet return for this you give to me,—
Full of the sounding shore; the shining sea;
Voices of birds; the rainbows mystic bend;
Passion, despair, and hope that doth defend
Our life from living death; old chivalry,
That we might miss, save for thy verse and thee,
No book whose fame may fly to the great world's end.

But O thou singer of no thought unfine!
If ever I bring to birth the glad full song
That moves in me,—'twill not be mine alone;
Though none may know, as I, how all along
The master's look sent art through every line,—
Scattered the doubt and helped me to my own.

From J. G. Holland. October 17, 1874.

If you could have seen the hearty tears that came into my eyes when I read your note, you would have known how much good you had done me. I did not know until then, how, in the steeled life I have lived for fifteen years, I had been hungry for just those words. They melted me as if I had been wax, and I thanked God for you. I have many friends—blind ones—and their praise has none but a mercantile value to me. Yours is more precious than gold, and no reward that I shall ever receive for this little book can give me half the pleasure it has afforded me. You are more than just—you are generous.

May the good Father smile upon you, give you health and strength and inspiration to win all the success, all the honor, all the satisfaction your manhood and artist nature desire! And if you never have known it, may you some time know in full experience the pleasure you have given to me.

To T. B. Aldrich. January 14, 1877.

"Flower and Thorn" is a beautiful book; a perfect book, in every way, bodily, spiritually, artistically. I can't find anything

in it to alter, or to leave out. And how rare to meet a perfect book, a ripe, full-bred perfect artist! And in the slovenly rush and cram of this day, how trying it is that a book which would have made, of itself, a lasting reputation, in certain periods,—having to depend upon its *silent* truth and beauty for its recognition,—is noticed in a quarter-column, while a poet in top-boots fills newspaper pages with descriptions of his curvetings, lodgings, and appurtenances! However, the *staying power* of true poetry and fine *endeavor* is what tells in the end. I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the Righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread.—Which latter, in my mind, speaks well for the chances of the Twins!

Among your quatrains, "Maple Leaves," and "Masks," "Popularity," and "The Rose," are so fine as almost to furnish examples from which one might evolve a *theory of the quatrain*—just as we have theories of the sonnet. Certainly, no better poems of their length were ever written, in old times or new. Among the longer poems I find it hard to choose. "Spring in New England" is perhaps the strongest and highest, and rarest. The stanzas on an intaglio head always had for me a special grace and charm. But there is a grace and charm about all your so carefully modeled work, Tom, which *I* appreciate more with every year—contrasting it with the turbid uncertain current of most of our verse. I always did love a trout-stream.—As our later poems come out, I sometimes feel sad to think how many will see them who have not known, and may never know, the good poetry we have written in former years. To these new readers your last poems are "the best" you ever have made. But in years still later, when fame has become popularity—or rather, has popularity clothed upon it,—then all your poems will be read together, in collected form, and our old favorites will have a *renaissance*. So that nothing good is in the end lost.

To Austin Dobson.

January 16, 1878.

The least one can do for a true poet, and the best thing one can do for one's self, is to buy that poet's volumes. This is a belief by which I long have guided my practice. And if ever I receive a gift-copy in addition, then I bestow my "boughten" (old English, current in Yankee-land) copy upon one of the elect among my

choicest friends. So you may be sure that I did not suspend my rules in anticipation of receiving from you a copy of your new edition. "Proverbs in Porcelain" passed from the bookseller's table to my own, very soon after the earliest copies reached this city; and I have taken it up so often that I doubt if there is in it a bit of Sèvres, Dresden, Spode, or Majolica, with which I am not tolerably familiar. To my taste, the dialogues—so new, so fragile, so lightly and firmly tinted—are exquisite. I can well understand your fear that the British mind will not at once comprehend them—especially the mind of the Philistine Briton. Yet, if they become the mode, the Philistine Briton will do his best; and be proud of his claim to comprehend them. I think that "Good Night, Babette!" possibly from its pathos, is my favourite among these six pieces. The *Rondels and Rondeaux*, of course, are the matter next of interest to any modern poet, and have a curious charm for my ear. (Quite a number of them, I think, have reached me through the Newspapers. Our journals are wont to copy dainty things from your magazines. Only to-night I have cut your "Ballad of Prose and Rhyme," as you see from the N. Y. *Times*.) These experiments in the old French manner greatly enrich our English thesaurus, and you manage them delightfully—no one so well. But, after all, I believe you are best when unfettered, when singing, more smoothly than any of your lyric-idyllic mates, directly from your own throat and heart. In the lines "To a Greek Girl," and "A Song of the Four Seasons," I find your essential self, the poet who so delighted me with "A Dead Letter," "An Autumn Idyll," "Tu Quoque," and others of your lyrics which I first read. The Rondels are finely adapted for preludes and endings; nothing could be better than "When *Finis* Comes." But I am quite sure that you are either too timid or too modest in your hesitation to essay a long poem in some measure like that of "Polypheme"—which it is evident you can carry as long as you choose. If you could get hold of a purely English tale; time, that of Dolly Varden patterns; scene, on the upper Thames; quality, humor and pathos blended; atmosphere, *your own:*—you would make of it something very fine. Not too many foreign words. Tone it to the English ear, and please that ear with a finesse made perfect by your French Studies —without that ear's suspecting it. After all, this is a very vague suggestion. . . . Do you care to read an attempt at billowy blank-verse? 'Tis my share of the Whittier tribute on the old prophet's

seventieth birthday. He is a mixture of Burns and Elijah, if you can conceive of such a personage. . . . Who may be the author of "Prometheus, the Fire Giver" (Chatto)? I have long had the conception of such an attempt.

To W. D. Howells.

November 15, 1878.

I don't get *any* time to read—scarcely any for writing—but the opening portion of your "Lady of the Aroostook" took my eye, and last night I read it through, after finishing this notice. The gradual change in your work is a perpetual surprise to me—certainly a curious study. This tale is absolutely *realistic*, and as such must be estimated. You tell what you have seen, and speak what you've heard—and I should think your friends would all cut you, lest they too should be subjected to your confoundedly accurate eye and ear. The dialect and manners of your down-Easters are perfect. I know them well. And I was especially taken by your remarks upon Japanese Tea—or, I might say, your Yankee corollary to Macaulay on bear-baiting.

But you started as a poet, you know, and must not banish idealism entirely from our tastes. I think, myself, that a combination of the subjective and objective furnishes the rarest literature. It seems to me that you too rigidly prescribe certain limits to yourself—saying, "this thing I can do better than others, can do thoroughly well, therefore I will do no more."

To Charles Warren Stoddard.

December 8, 1878.

Possibly I had been too hopeful in supposing that, after your years of charming travel—reflected in your charming letters to the press—and after once more seeing your own people, you would feel like putting in some steady labor at work in which a very little *energy* would make you cheerfully devote an hour or two in the evening, now and then, to literature for our market—instead of to ease and pleasure.—You know that *all* my writing is done after a long day's work—or in hours when others have a jolly time; you can accomplish anything you *choose* to do. You speak justly of the limited amount of an author's or magazinist's income. True, it must depend upon his purpose and capacity for work. Fifteen years ago it was far more limited. No one could need and *love*

liberty more, or be less adapted to harness, than I was then and am now. Probably, because I *had* a wife and children and had a sense of "noblesse oblige," I managed to support all four by my pen—the Lord knows how—and to keep some sort of an ideal still in view. Now your market is *not* limited to the Pacific Coast nor to newspaper letters. You are well esteemed here, and can sell all the good work you choose to turn out. It *seems* to me that you do not do justice to your delicate gifts, strengthened by travel and literary experience. Our really poetical and clever writers are deuced few, and there is a good market now, for all their work. I want to see you follow the craft for which you were born, and exercise a little resolve. A restless wandering youth is appropriate and agreeable to witness: a Bohemian after thirty has a frame badly suited to his picture.

So much for an honest feeling of waste which comes over me, and for an honest and blunt expression of interest in your having a definite purpose and career. The words are bald, old, commonplace, I know, and also that you well may ask if I have any right to say them. Thereupon I plant myself upon the comity of authorship—and a genuine regard for the full development of every American writer.

Besides, I have a base and selfish interest in your making the most of your advantages. Of course, a large portion of your working-hours—say the morning, for instance,—must be taken, as you intimate, for the pot-boiling letters, etc., on which you depend for immediate support.

In Mr. Stedman's diary, April 2, 1879, there appears this note: "Have been literally forced, at last, with great reluctance, to prepare the 'manifold letter' opposite. It may help me out a little." This is the letter:

PRIVATE.

Dear Sir, or Madam,

Your letter is received. For several years so much correspondence has reached me, from friends and strangers, that their commissions and requests, and even *the letters written in reply*, have exhausted my time, forced me to abandon my professional work, and added to a burden of ill-health under which I have been struggling.

It is a question whether *I shall give up all my other duties*, or pray to be excused from this labor which has forestalled them. Finally I have been *compelled* to resolve that hereafter I must not,

(1) Read any Mss. sent me, nor give advice concerning them;

(2) Offer any person's Mss. to an editor or publisher;

(3) Engage to deliver poems or addresses, upon ordinary occasions, before societies, etc.;

(4) *Respond to miscellaneous requests for service, and to literary and other communications not essential to my regular work.*

I also am under strict orders to forego the pleasure of social and general correspondence with my personal acquaintances. It is with reluctance that I have prepared this manifold letter, which I trust you considerately will regard as *private*. My friends will not misinterpret it, and no others can justly enter a complaint.

Referring again to this letter, he says:

While one reserves the precious liberty of keeping up the lost art of (true) letter-writing, according to his modes and tenses, it is after all—the letter-writing to one's *peers* that is the real burden of an author who must live by his pen. Enjoyable, but exhausting. *Inter-professional* letters on *literary business*—are exceptions, and belong to the comity of authors.

This circular answers one-half of my mail. One-quarter can be answered by a secretary. The remaning one-quarter, referred to in the note on the next page, is the tough pull.

To ———

October 8, 1880.

Now as to your first composition—theme, *Meditative Poetry*. You are right in first reading Bryant and Wordsworth. Wordsworth is the King of "Reflective" or "Meditative" Poetry, *among poets of all periods and languages*. I will refer to him again in a moment. Meantime, a few *rough* hints, which doubtless have occurred to you already, and which need to be thought out and put in language at greater length by yourself. Meditative Poetry does not arise in the early period of a race or nation. The early periods are those of work, action, heroism—hence ballad and epic poetry, lyric song. It is not the poetry of human life and passion or achievement—which breeds the *drama*, and spirited romantic and narrative verse. It is not the poetry

of extremely cultured *taste* and æstheticism—these produce *art-verse*, like Swinburne's and Rossetti's and Morris's work, among the English. It is not the poetry of grand national crises and religions, of national emotions and reforms, which produced Dante and Milton. Nor is it *sunny* descriptive and lyrical verse—such as a blithesome, freer, out-door life, like that of Burns, awakens. Yet it is often *allied* with the two latter classes, taking national and religious affairs and crises and emotions for its texts, and treating them *meditatively* and with reflective insight.

It seems to be the product, largely, of retirement, and self-thought, on the part of a poet, either in the city or country—quite often in the latter. It is the philosophic and *imaginative* chanting of a recluse, scholar, or otherwise—but always a thinker,—of a poet who knows how to *see*, and how to "see into the life of things," as Wordsworth says, it is the outflow of

> "that serene and blessèd mind,
> . . . . . .
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.

It is also, in distinction from the kinds of verse hitherto named, a characteristic of a rather advanced period of national growth—the period when *wisdom* and *insight* have come, to many, through experience of past history, etc.

The danger of *Meditative Verse* is that in feeble hands, and often in the hands of true poets, it is likely to become *prosy* and *didactic:* to say what might as well be *said in prose*, and *this is not poetry*. Nothing should be said in verse that can be as well said in prose. "A poet is a thing light, with wings," said Plato, and hence he must always *soar*, never *walk*, not even for the sake of *teaching*.

Now you understand why the early English poets were lyrical, epic, dramatic,—*not* meditative. In the great and tuneful age of Elizabeth they sang, like birds, because they could not help singing. When came Pope and Queen Anne's time,—moral, argumentative and *didactive* verse was the nearest approach made to a true Meditative school. In the hands of a great man like Pope, these *essays in verse* were real poems, like his "Essay on Man."

But in hosts of feeble hands they were so dull and prosy as to make the English School of verse almost worthless for a century. The few noble exceptions were men like Goldsmith, Collins and Gray. Parts of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and "The Traveller," are "meditative," *allied* with the "descriptive," and highly poetic. Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is *a real* meditative poem, and nothing else, and one of the first great specimens in our language.

Before his time, however, Milton's "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," partook of the reflective class—just as *Emerson's poems do now*, though cast in a lyrical form. And, in a certain sense, the great English elegies, like his "Lycidas," and Spenser's "Astrophel," are meditative; and so are the *religious musings* of Herbert and Vaughan, and especially one or two poems of James Shirley's; and of Andrew Marvell. All these worthies figure in Aiken's "British Poets," of which I think I gave you my copy?

Thomson's "Seasons," Young's "Night Thoughts," Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination," etc., are both descriptive and meditative, but not very fine poetry. *Didacticism dulled* the meditative poets of the last century, till *Cowper arose*. (Died, 1800.)

Cowper was the founder, or precursor, of the Nineteenth Century Meditative School. We had in his "Task" and various other poems, wisdom, tenderness, *simplicity*, and much imagination. After his death, poets of a more stirring order, the great romantic singers—Byron, Scott, Moore, etc.,—took the public attention; but a little brood of meditative singers kept on through the Georgian era, through and after the rise of Keats (the head of the Art-School), *and at the head of them all was the great* and good Wordsworth—born 1770, who wrote poetry for 60 years, (1790–1850) and died, Poet laureate, in our own time—1850.

The unimportance of his minor contemporaries, of his own school, shows that Meditative Poetry is only endurable at the hands of a true and noble poet. (I should add that Coleridge wrote much meditative verse, but it is not his *best*.) Even three-fourths of Wordsworth's great mass of verse is so inferior to the product of his loftiest moments, that if the remaining fourth did not exist, he would have had no reputation.

It is not necessary for you to wade through all Wordsworth's verse. Study his noblest meditative pieces. They are the best ever written:

1. "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye."

(Read the above *carefully*, throughout: It begins, "Five years have past.")

2. "Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, etc."

3. *Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg.*

4. "To the Cuckoo." "O Nightingale! thou surely art." "The Solitary Reaper." "*I wandered lonely as a cloud.*" "My heart leaps up." "*Three years she grew.*"

5. Sonnets: "It is a beauteous evening." "*The world is too much with us.*" "Composed upon Westminster Bridge."

6. *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood.*

These are all you need read of Wordsworth, at present, and all are either beautiful or lofty specimens. They show how great reflective poetry can be, when composed by a wise, subtle, good, *imaginative* poet—by a born poet.

Bryant is our American Wordsworth, and was his contemporary, and like him, a student of Cowper, etc. He applied his meditation to the superb American landscape, to our American idea of freedom, etc. Also highly noble and *imaginative*. Read "Thanatopsis," "A Forest Hymn," "The Past," "A Rain Dream," "The Death of Slavery," "An Evening Revery."

Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is a meditative poem, though cast in a lyrical form and the greatest *sustained* and *long* poem of this class in modern times.

Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hugh Clough have been poets of a decidedly meditative cast—and among the few successful ones after Wordsworth.

Emerson's meditative poetry is loftily *philosophical*, and often highly and originally lyrical. It resembles the Persian philosophical verse, such as that of *Omar Khayam*. I should be inclined to place him at the head of living philosophico-lyrical poets, but possibly he falls outside the scope of the definition given you.

To W. Sloane Kennedy.

November 5, 1880.

Your letter and poem reach me, and I am glad to see you have a better outlook, and I like the way you talk. Accept my thanks

for your remarks *in re* the Whitman article. It is my impression that the section on decency is as original as anything in it. Mr. Reid says he shall reprint it in the *Tribune*.

The enclosed poem "A Dream of Death" is "lurid," but it is also very striking,—and grotesquely imaginative. The idea of the Djinn is very weird-dorêesque. Were I an editor, I should accept it at once, provided you were so thoughtful and courteous as to send me a clean copy. Don't think me conventional and pragmatical, but I really think an article offered *in the market* ought to be neatly done up. Were I you, I should make a clean draft of this fantasy, and send it, with the enclosed card, to the "Editor of *Scribner's Monthly*," and see what comes of it.

Do you like "flowers sweet" in the second stanza? The inversion mars it, and "sweet" is a weak adjective here. The "O Christ!" has been a little overdone. With these trifling exceptions, the poem is worthy of Blake.

To Kate Field.

December 11, 1881.

In *Latin* you might have (like Horace's *Ars Poetica* or Ovid's *Ars Amoris*):

Ars Ornationis, "The Art of Adorning" (or Ornamenting, or Adornment).

Ars Exornationis is more classic Latin, but doesn't sound quite so well to my ear. It means The Art of Adorning, decorating, even embellishment—often also applying to the toilet.

Or you can have:

Res Elegantes=Elegant Things, (or Affairs pertaining to Luxurious Beauty) or even *Ars Elegantiæ*=The Art of Elegance—Taste, Grace, etc.

In *Greek*, I can think of nothing but the following, which I will write in English letters:

Erga Charienta=Works (or deeds) full of Grace, Taste, Beauty, or

Erga Aglaä=Works, (or deeds) full of beauty, or

Ta Charienta=Things full of grace and beauty, or

Ta Kallista=Things most full of the beautiful, or

Ta Aglaä=Things Beautiful.

He Kommotiké is what Plato uses distinctly for "The Art of Decoration"—but it looks strangely enough in English text!

As you are as good an English scholar as myself, and far more clever, I shall not find any English title for you.

To his son Arthur.

At present you are merely learning *how* to print and run a newspaper—soon the time will come when *what* your newspaper says and teaches will be the main point. In short, you will soon have need of *convictions*. Then you must gain the habit and power to discern what is the right and wrong of every question—political, moral, literary, social, local, etc., and which side your soundest readers will in the end take, and what it is most *expedient* and *loyal* to assert. There your good sense, good morals, and above all, *tact*, will come in. A journalist, too, must decide quickly, and yet must not "go off half-cocked." Make all your work, even the trifling item, *first-class* in its own fashion.

To W. M. Laffan.

March 9, 1882.

Yes, I will try to write you another Stuyvesant ballad, and to have it ready in time: though why the —— should require time to "go over" is more than I know—they being usually half-seas-over, if not more. A ballad, you know, with any legend in it, has to be somewhat long and thin—but only a few points need be illustrated. I *always invent* the legends of my ballads, and in fact there are no *good* legends of Stuyvesant's time in N. Y. That of Peter's "New Year's Call" was sheer invention. I wish you would look at it, in one of the 10 copies of my poems sent to the T. C.—Can't do another one so good as that. 'Twas written for *Vanity Fair*, years ago, and illustrated by Mullen—now sketching in Hades. In Tiffany's colored glass, it now emblazons my dining-room.

Will write, possibly, two ballads—semi-humorous, and let you take your choice. I enclose a serious one, written last December. Don't read it, if you don't care for verse. Most modern verse bores me. But I did like "Dorothy."

Yes: I *was* at Vanderbilt's, and prowled around for two hours. 'Twould be magnificent, if it were not all *new*—most of the pictures included. The latter, however, *are* masterpieces. What a Millet, what a Duprê! On the whole, the Mammonite interior I found to be in better taste than I had thought possible. One book, in his

"library," was well-read: the volume of "Successful Americans," or "Progressive Men"—I forget the exact title.

To Julia C. R. Dorr.

March 31, 1882.

I have your letter of yesterday, and will at once say that, as I read your ballad (when it came), I observed that the stanza in dispute was not precisely in consonance with the rest of the poem—although I at once saw that the accents were meant to fall on the penultimate syllable of the phrases,

betrayed-him
and
laid-him.

In other words that—as in the second stanza of page 9, and the first of page 10,—the rhymes were meant to be "feminine"—not "masculine." And, as I rarely care for minute criticisms, (and as a temporary discord sometimes heightens the general effect of a whole piece of music), I thought no more about it.

However, there *is* rather an abrupt jar in that stanza—read it how you will—since the ballad-measure elsewhere is invariably preserved. The real trouble neither you nor Mr. Randolph have hit upon: it is the *shortness* of the 2d and 4th lines. In the 2d stanza of page 9, you have an extra syllable in each of the rhymed lines, which guides and *forces* one to place the *accents* correctly. If the stanza in dispute should be written (merely to illustrate the accent):

"Sore she cried, in anguish
Lest malice had betrayed him"—

it would be poor stuff, but there would *be no doubt how to read it.* You might also, I think, have written on this plan:

Sore she cried, in anguish
To find his {rest / grave} betrayed,
"He is not here! I know not
Where now his {dust / form} is laid!"

This, of course, is deplorably commonplace beside the words in St. John. You are right in detesting inversion above all things—

and hence in not accepting Mr. Randolph's version. But it is a pity that there should be a sudden jar in so even a ballad. I would sooner make the lines seem inordinately long, if the final accents were settled beyond doubt,—would even say:

Sore she cried, in terror
Lest (malice) had betrayed him,
(bad!)
They have taken away my Master!
I know not where they have laid him!

All these substitutes, of course, are doggerel, and only written to show how readers can be *forced* to place an accent correctly—the English being, in verse and scansion, chiefly an *accentuate* language. The greatest liberty is allowed in length of lines, number of syllables, etc., so long as the *accents* are unmistakable. These two lines, e. g., are of the same (metrical) length:

| | | |
One! Two! Three! Four!
| | | |
The cow jumped over the barnyard door!

Yet one has 4 *syllables*, and the other—nine.

To Constance F. Woolson.

November 12, 1882.

Of course I read "Anne" seriatim—you never write a line that I do not read at once. You could not have felt more concerned than myself in its quality, in its reception. All in all, I considered it a beautiful work—an epochal stage in your career as a creative writer. And I will say at once that I agree with those critics who think the original, faultless, creative manner and standard of the first half of the novel in certain respects superior to the remainder. It seemed as if you threw a sop to Cerberus, or adopted a mistaken form of continuance, in relying somewhat upon realistic plot and counterplot for the disposition of your characters. Your true self, your highest and most creative standard, are found in the early portraitures; in the ideal and growth of your large-moulded heroine. But as a first novel, "Anne" is a noble effort, confirming me in my early belief that you can and will produce masterpieces, and become our foremost writer of imaginative

prose. And you were amazingly fortunate in the backing given you by your powerful publishers.

. . . . . .

I have just got the *Harper's* containing the opening of your new novel—which I expect to like better than I like its rather inconsequential title. You are now *sure* of your audience; take your time, do *not* overwork, do not strain your eyes, do not be afraid to lie "fallow" for long periods—meditating great rather than *many* novels. You have only yourself to maintain, and have not ———'s excuse for bringing out a new book every half-year. Your imagination is more *creative* than Howells's or James's—follow your own vent, give us life and passion and color, and do not, like them, overdo your "analysis" and "subtilties." Their novels are clever, dexterous; let yours be free, imaginative, dramatic, human, and not without poetic elevation.

A note pencilled Christmas Night, 1882, on the fly leaf of "Doctor Grimshawe's Secret" by Nathaniel Hawthorne:

After the most careful analysis, I have made up my mind that this book, *is*, substantially, the elder Hawthorne's throughout. J. H. may have—probably has—cemented it a little, here and there. No greater addition to romantic literature *could* be made, at this time, than the production of all the *Mss.* connected with this tale—the many "Studies" for it, etc.; no instruction half so momentous *could* be given to a literary artist of the right sort. And I am strangely, mysteriously, impressed by this book; having, in my boyhood's isolation, so fed upon Hawthorne's work; having, in older years, by chance become so closely acquainted with those of his blood; having made him the subject of a poem; having, by a strange coincidence, within the last Summer again visited Leicester Hospital, (this time with my son), and observed the minutest details given with such weird and yet realistic effect in these pages.

To Lilian Whiting.

December 31, 1882.

Every writer should have a dear and conscientious piece of "masterwork" on hand—so as to feel the chance of ultimately achieving an ideal, the consciousness that all one's work is not ephemeral. Pick out some rare and famous personage, to whom

you are most attached, and undertake a sympathetic and critical biography: some woman like Miss Fuller, some man like ???—at all events some poetic and well-known soul that has passed away. And don't write with fluency, but architecturally,—as the French write at their best.

Curiously, I wrote a long letter to Caine (who sent me his Rossetti) about the Buchanan-Swinburne-Rossetti feud. I *allude* to it, merely, in "Victorian Poets." *Have you seen* Swinburne's "Under the Microscope," his terrible withering onslaught on Buchanan. It is rare. I have a cherished copy.

To H. S. Morris and J. A. Henry.

February 25, 1883.

My dear Arcadians, you can't, by any possibility, *know* how fortunate you are!

To be young, to be "in Love's land to-day," to have comrades and the joy of *camaraderie*, to be full of music and have the heart and leisure for playing on the Pan's-pipes which you bear—no, you never will know, till out of the Happy Valley, how fortunate you were while in it!

Thank you, both, for sending an older and wayworn minstrel (*et ego in Arcadia*) these leaves from your score. Sing while you can, for it is not true that the Springtime *always* returns.

In generously responding to a request for a memory of his friend, Mr. Harrison S. Morris writes:

To speak of Mr. Stedman, always, to me, brings back Arcadia—those days of boyish love for Nature and books, romance and song and friendship, which he so conspicuously stood for amongst us youngsters who were fingering the pipes while he played far up the sides of Parnassus.

My first acquaintance with him was by letter. My friend John Arthur Henry, a vagabond and troubadour by nature who knew English poetry before he was out of the nest, had with me, issued a small pamphlet called "A Duet in Lyrics" and this was sent very grandly, though very brazenly, to Mr. Stedman. It was just like him in his sweetness and sympathy and in his extreme boyishness to write us the dearest of letters, full of the equality which we could not claim, and full of praise I fear we did not deserve. This was the beginning, and from then until his death Mr. Stedman

allowed me to be a friend, to see him whenever I could find time in a busy and busier life, and to know his sentiments and occasionally to share his life in his home.

I remember those early visits to West Seventy-eighth Street—I think it was—where he was somewhat driven by stress of affairs and by the ever-haunting pile of correspondence which grimly met him when he sat at his desk. He would go upstairs to the third floor and see us comfortably in our rooms—which were lined with overflowing book-cases—and once he apologized for leaving us there alone with so much minor poetry.

But the first visit of all is really the most memorable. I forget the street and number, but it was farther down town, and it was on one of those evenings when company gathered and made a brilliant intellectual feast. Lüders and I ventured over there together, having been separately invited and being rather timid alone. Lüders was then writing those jocund lyrics for *Life*, and more serene verse for the monthlies. He was a demure soul, but vibrating with poetry. Mr. Stedman greeted us together and told people how we were a pair of poets he had brought down with one shot—which embarrassed but pleased us, and we were soon at home in the crowded rooms where Vereshtchagin and Kate Field and Harriet Monroe and Eugene Field were the people I remember best. Mrs. Stedman was sweet and kind to us young strangers, as she always was to me afterwards, and Arthur from that time to his lamented death became my warm friend.

In Philadelphia I suppose I was the most accessible correspondent, and I often had letters asking me to get books or see people about various editorial work; and so, when Mr. Stedman came over for the series of lectures on Poetry, I saw much of him and was delighted with his talk and his busy eager ways. Once I breakfasted alone with him at his hotel, and we had a very intimate conversation on his family and his future. He said to me very solemnly: "Take care of Arthur;" and I accepted this, perhaps chance-spoken, trust as a sacred one, and always felt that I was somehow picked out for this duty, which poor Arthur made it no great task to fulfill. He was with me for a while as an assistant on *Lippincott's Magazine*, and I was always in touch with him saving for some years when he was in London, until the last day when he was visible to any friend. I believe I was the last who had any speech with him before he passed out of view for

the week of his absence, and so out of life. It was a satisfaction to see him gazing at his father's portrait in the Century Club and to feel in his talk and in the glance of his eye that real admiration and filial love which he bore to him. Those who knew Arthur well miss him deeply.

There never was anybody like Mr. Stedman for the sympathy which makes us wiser and better. His presence, or his letters, or just the sense of his existence, were stimulants to the well-being of every one who really knew him. Great he was, in his knowledge and in his achievement, but more than gifts and wisdom and works was this uplift of his spirit. He gave all he had to others. I often feel that he never got enough in return.

To John Burroughs.

October 6, 1883.

I would have given much to be out of all this coil, and with you and Whitman on the sea-beach. You made a grand two—and we should have made a good three—a kind of Athos, Porthos and Aramis, of natural life. You see I am modest enough to assign to you and Whitman the first and nobler two of the countertypes.

This letter, and the book sent you to-day, are addressed to the place named in yours of the 2d—but there is no such P. O., so I have drawn my bow at a venture and strengthened the aim by adding "Ulster Co." Now, O man of many post-offices! or, I should say, of multitudinous address,—what *is* the true mode of directing a letter to you?

The book in question is a rather poor (but the latest) compilation of sea-poetry. You asked for it just in time, as I am henceforth separated from my library: we having rented our pretty homestead and removed to humbler quarters. "Bohemia" was my long-time province, and I am but reclaiming citizenship, you know. The book is edited by a woman,—as a piece of "book-making." Of course she had to "read up" for the job. Now, I doubt if anyone should make such a book, or even write a paper on such a theme, unless so *bred upon it*, like myself, from youth and by natural tendency, that every worthy line relating to it is in the head and heart *already*.

The English tongue is richer in sea-poetry than any other language: we are all Vikings, you know. From the noble salty foam of the old dramatists and their compeers, Miss Ward seems to

have caught but little spray; and of the glorious maritime Scottish and English ballads, centuries old, she has no wind-borne sense at all. In our own time, however, both the major and minor English poets (Browning being a marked exception) are usually most free and *unartificial* when along shore or off soundings. Kingsley's "Andromeda"—and his lyrics, how full both of the *anerithmon gelasma* and the infinite heart-break of the restless waves! Tennyson, also. And, for the psychical, most subtle, most profound interpretation of the sea's continuous chiming, one has that remarkable poem of Rossetti's "The Sea-Limits," without which no ocean-glossary can be complete. The finest thing upon a shell is, of course, in Landor's *Gebir:* Wordsworth's kindred passage is of low degree comparatively but Wordsworth heard and knew the broader ocean harmonies. Miss Ward's excursions with Longfellow are far too limited; and of Whitman's few,[1] but wonderful, watchings and recountings of Sea from Shore she gives us not one rhythmic strain! Can anything, outside of Walt's unsurpassed "Sea-shore Memories," equal his "Man-of-War Bird" for suggestions of boundlessness, spiritual unfetterment, the breadth, the sweep, the dawn-and-eve gloom and glory of the elemental world? Thoreau, in the prose of "Cape Cod," should be bound side and side with Whitman—both have Homeric traits. . . .

For myself, I was born and brought up by the sea, and in it, and on it—it is my first and last love—my element of refuge and rest. My father was buried in mid-ocean, where sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell, and where I too would go to lie beside him—without fear, and as in the benignant course of Nature. Of the sea-poetry, (too little), which I have felt moved to write, one piece, "The Lord's-Day Gale," is in a little book ("Hawthorne," etc.,) which I once gave you. It is my own favorite, and some think it the best, of all my longer lyrics. I find it, together with "Surf," in Miss Ward's collection. I know that you know Mrs. Thaxter's verse thoroughly. For maritime war-verse, see Henry Howard Brownell. Boker's "Ballad of Sir John Franklin" comes to my mind. Old Michael Drayton is the father of all naval-poets. Chapman has a splendid sea-passage. And Shakespeare, as in all else, on the ocean, both as dramatist and lyrist, transcends all others since the Greeks.

[1] "Starting from Paumanok" as he did, I wonder he did not write more and earlier of the ocean, even than he has. [E. C. S.]

To A. C. L. Botta.

November 23, 1883.

Right in the midst of my pressing work, on my busiest day, it is "borne in" upon me to write you an *admonition.*

I want you, at once, while your pen is still as fresh as ever, to begin upon your *Memoirs and Reminiscences.* No person in America can write so interesting and lasting a book, of that kind, as yours would be. Begin at the beginning—in Providence—go on with New York, with Poe, Willis, Margaret Fuller—all the others —down to Oscar Wilde and Story! What a volume you can make,—if you choose! Do it, and begin at once.

To Abby Sage Richardson.

January 14, 1884.

Your introduction is quite perfect in its clear and classic simplicity, and exquisite for delicacy of treatment. It is done with a firm, yet womanly, hand,—and I doubt if any woman but you could have done it so well.

Abelard is the most sorrowful personage in history—the most tragical of sufferers. I saw a story (true) recently of a woman who falls into waking trances, of such a nature that during them she has no knowledge of her past life; they also render her a different personage altogether, as to her friendships, tastes, loves, etc. Abelard was just as utterly transformed—and irreparably. He became something below and above man. Not the tenets of the church, but the mystic subordination of the human soul to its earthly tabernacle, made him what he became. Perhaps the highest proof of his inherent bravery, self-respect, and *spiritual manhood,* was his absolute refusal even to show any longing for affection, any feeling of weakness "wild with all regret" and despair,—to be as dead in spirit as he was in the body. *He* saw the sword of flame between Heloise and himself; she, still a woman, beat against it in vain and with impassioned cries. Yes: we are all slaves to these natural laws. Abelard was changed in body, soul, mind. We cannot summon him to account.

To Philip B. Marston.

January 14, 1884.

I can fancy you sitting in your corner-chair, as I always remember you,—there brooding with sight turned inward—and some-

times rising out of your self-communion to wonder whether all faraway friends must cease to be comrades, and why one in particular did not hasten to answer your letter now two months old, and to send winged words on the Western gale responsive to the "Wind-Voices" which came to him from England.

There is no doubt that the range and vigor of this volume make it quite in advance of its predecessors. As a whole it is marked by the profound feeling, the spiritual and passionate emotion which distinguishes your poetry,—and which renders it so *subjective*, not in the weak, but the noble, sense of that word. But I am pleased to find so many poems of a more objective and purely artistic nature; pieces somewhat narrative and dramatic like the "Ballad of Brave Women," "Nightshade," "He and She," "Monk Julius," "Caught in the Nets," etc., and many dramatic lyrics, all which lend greatly to the strength and variety of the collection. On the other hand, I am disappointed not to find, as I half expected, one long narrative poem such as I am sure you could write with great effect. The number and beauty of the Sonnets are very notable—now that Rossetti is gone, who is there in England, or in English verse, to rival you in this form of verse? Perhaps it is in your masterly sonnets that one finds your most intense expression and reads your whole heart.

A period of great depression is upon us here—men's minds are occupied with care and doubt—but I think this book will find its way to the selectest readers, and shall write you again ere long as to its reception.

We have given up our home in 54th St., and are now in quiet lodgings at the address given in this letter. Mrs. Stedman joins with me in kind remembrances. Last Sunday night I went out, for the first time since my trouble, to a dinner—to meet Mr. Arnold. We rather like him as a man, but think that he sees things here rather through books and papers than with his eyes. He has preconceived notions, and really can't expect to read the true character of our life and thought as a show-lecturer hawked about by D'Oyley Carte, *à la* Oscar Wilde. Irving is making a mint of money, East and West. Our critics think him a great artist and manager, but *not* a great actor, except in his semi-melodramatic parts. The fact is that he has profited by expressing and reflecting the artistic, picturesque spirit of this *decorative* age.

The following paragraphs are culled from various letters:

It is often hard to work up to the really inspired portion of one's poem—is more of a forced or professional process—is it not? I find it so. Often I cut out a great deal of a "prelude," ruthlessly, and begin abruptly at the *real* beginning of the poem as it really came to me.

Artistic, and full of thought and color, as your poems are, I do not see that they are very *American* except a few of which the lovely "Anne" (Sudbury Lane, Old Style) is perhaps the most notable. They might have been written, in fact, by some choice pupil of the English art school. Now, you have the gift and taste to enable you to make what you choose of yourself. I believe in the universal franchise of a poet—he has a right to draw his themes and feeling from the world at large. But if you want to make an *impression*—to have the people everywhere listen to your song, you must discover your own new and special touch, motive, field, method. What these are, no one can indicate for you, but you must discover them—and you will not regret having done so, in the end.

There is only one let-down in your statement. You wish to write for occupation and for a better income, yet say you have *absolutely no talents*. If the latter assertion is true, you are too honest, and have too high a standard, to feel that you have any right to enter the market. If I did not believe that I had a talent for writing which *ought* to be employed, I assure you that, (with my respect for the profession of letters and for those who make it a *vocation*,) I never would print a single line.

The story of Peter Rugg (of which I have the complete text) is indeed remarkable. I am convinced, in my own mind, *that our great Hawthorne found the key to his own genius when he read that tale.*

When Mr. ——— accepted the Presidency of the ——— Club, on condition that the club would clear off its debt, a cynic said that it was a good thing for a club to be out of debt—"even at that price!" So I am exceedingly glad to hear from you, and to have my pleasant associations of last summer reviewed, even at the

cost (a very serious one to me) of having to examine your friend's *Ms.*

To Paul Hermes.

December 7, 1884.

I saw at once that there was something "worth while" in your "Confessions," and would not write you until after making that best of all acquaintanceships—the knowledge of an artist which can be obtained only from his work. Don't you find a man's book to be like the "Mental Photograph Album," in which, do what he will—even in burlesque—he cannot disguise his individuality?

Last night I read all of your poems in this volume, and none without interest, for they differ from most of the refined and over-refined verse now current in being mixed, like Opie's colors, with brains. What is art but "a means of expression," [1] why say or sing, unless one has something to say? Your vantage-ground, then, is one of intellectuality. Of two artists, equally favored with gifts of music, color, design, the one who knows, thinks, feels, the most, will draw ahead after the first heat. In your fine "Hymn of Force," and in "World-Wide" you handle *poetically* the problem with which an age of Science has silenced the old Poetry by *dis-illusionizing it*,—and are on the starry path to our poetry of the future. "Paul" on the whole, seems to me one of your best pieces—sustained, wholesome, fine in its comprehension of both the old and *new* worlds. "The Modern Odyssey" is imaginative—and if there is any rarer quality than imagination in latter-day verse my judgment is greatly at fault. "How deep is Love?" and "Mankind's Highest" are true and artistic—the lines on Shakespeare very original. There—I have not written so much to a new poet for a long while—the reason is that poets are lonely nowadays—their neighbors are so few! One who in this age, (when, for various reasons, it may be said—"Multis annis *jam peractis*, Poetry is out of practice"—) being a natural poet, dares to essay our unfashionable calling, instead of at once becoming a novelist, is a recruit who should be welcomed by the few who still cling to their ideals.

. . . If I did not see in some of your pieces a purely poetic intent, I should take a privilege and hint that many a fine poet has

[1] Poetry is utterance, not the "striving" for it. *All* strive for it; he who *succeeds* in utterance is the poet, the speaker for the rest. [E. C. S.]

been clouded, in the end, by too much metaphysics, etc. But that you know as well as I. Great as Emerson was, he ruined all his discipular *poets*. And remember Coleridge!

At first, I must say, I supposed your graceful and unusual name was a *nom de plume*. But when your letter came, over the same signature,—the letter of one gentleman to another,—I discovered my error.

"I have been reading a book which fascinates *me* (as a life-long Communistic-Socialist)—'Looking Backward'—and am sounding its praises. Here is one of your young Boston chaps who *thinks*. Thought is the last thing to be found in the books of those Cambridge writers whom *I* call 'the Bar Harbor School.' It has looked as if ideas were to die out down there, with your generation.

"Of course anyone can fashion his own scheme of things a hundred years to come; but never have I seen the evils of to-day, and the maudlin efforts of the good-rich to mollify them, so well set forth as in this little book. But why does E. B. use 'avocation' throughout, for 'vocation.' "

To Clinton Scollard.

March 9, 1885.

For several weeks your attractive little volume has been lying on the right of my study-table, with a steadily growing pile of other new books,—and on the top of the pile, because it had the most real poetry in it, and I wished to acknowledge it before the rest! . . .

I see that your songs and sonnets are plainly in the manner of the latest school, and that manner is charming when *unaffected*,—when naturally adopted by a young and true poet; and it is only just to say that your work, careful and successful as it is in technique, does have the charm of simplicity. You give us experiments, I see, in all of the revived "French forms," and I really don't know any one of us Yankees who has succeeded better with them as a whole.

There is no doubt, then, of your qualities as a natural and artistic workman. Your first book is what a first book by a young poet should be—the winnowed seed—grain that is to insure the future

harvests. With it you end your technical practice-work. Now for the native and noble theme, the passionate expression, that alone can make our people look again to Poetry as an inspirer—as an *indispensable need.* The time is ready, and the chance is before you.

To O. M. Dunham.

June 3, 1885.

Knowing my interest in the writer of "From Generation to Generation," and my confidence in his future, you can understand that I was uncommonly pleased at receiving your cordial and liberal acceptance of the manuscript this morning.

I feel sure you will not have cause to regret it. The letter which I received speaks of it as *my manuscript*, but as I fully explained that the author is a young gentleman of 24, I suppose you address me merely as his agent.

There are one or two passages which I have advised him to slightly change—this, with his great facility, he can easily do in a day or two.

And now the best thing I can do is to introduce Mr. Luska to you in person,—as he and his publisher ought to have no secrets from one another in this matter. Mr. Luska's real name is Harry Harland.

Mr. Howells, in recalling his memories of Mr. Stedman, said:

He was always very friendly, of course. He was very frank with me always, and, looking back, I knew how to value his praise and his friendship, though sometimes he was a little severe. I remember once he gave me quite a scolding because he thought I had put Harry Harland on the wrong track. He was the godfather of Harry Harland. He sympathized with him in his first efforts and told him how good they were, and so on. I noticed two or three of the books; as I was an intense realist, I praised what seemed a tendency to realism in them. After that Harland wrote a realistic novel. It was an account of art student life in Paris. It was very well done, but your grandfather thought it was a false step and that it was out of the line of Harland's natural genius; he thought that I was responsible for it and was very frank to say so. He would probably have approved of my theory of

fiction, but he didn't think it was the thing for Harry Harland, who was naturally and incurably romantic. . . . So far as I influenced Harry Harland, I probably did him a mischief. I remember Stedman's saying, "It's all right for you, but I think it is a bad thing for Harland."

Although Stedman was a generous critic and loved to praise people, he was conscientious about it, and was rather severe. He was always true to his convictions, and he was a serious man. . . .

To Charles Parsons.

July 11, 1885.

As Hosea Biglow says,

"My! ain't it dreffful? Can't be true!"

or words to that effect.—It isn't possibly the case that any writer or any magazine is going to do something with reference to *New York* literature and authors! For years, New York authors have been looked upon merely as useful dinner-givers and speech-makers, in honor of other authors and what-nots, from all parts of the world. I never heard of their having anything done for *them*, or that their own "literary movement" was considered worth recording.

Since your people are going to make such an innovation, we must do all we can to help you—and put our best faces forward. Here is a photograph, for which you ask—but I trust you will find better looking fellows to grace your article.

"Twenty years ago [in 1875] authors starved for want of patronage. But, of late, authors young and old, if they gain a little success are handled by syndicates, publishers, etc., as actors are 'run' by managers—are driven into doing more work than they ought to do, and more hastily, and tempted to edit books, write prefaces, and all sorts of hack-work—until they become like wells pumped-dry and forthwith 'abandoned.' "

To John W. Chadwick.

November 6, 1885.

You have done me quite a service in sending your sound and most graceful paper on American Sonnets. I have just reached Percival, in my editorial work on the "Library of Am. Literature,"

and have been reëxamining the little 2-vol. collection of his poems—and am glad to have had my attention directed to his Sonnets, especially to the one you quote. I caught glimpses of Percival during my brief boyhood-at-Yale—a strange, quaint figure in his camlet cloak, now and then emerging by twilight from his *owlery* in the State hospital. The story of his life is that of one possessed of and *by* a temperament far more poetic than his prodigal, often conventional—always scholarly and dithyrambic—verse would indicate. He seems to me a *poet-scholar* born as much before his time as Poe was, and just as much at a loss as Poe in an uncongenial day and region. He could do, and did do, the highest, most practical, most painstaking, most varied, scientific and scholarly work—and made $60. a year by it!

Gilder's "What is a Sonnet?" always has seemed to me his most *felicitous* poem. Nor is there the slightest doubt that a few of Aldrich's sonnets, notably those you name, are above his more popular lyrics in all that constitutes the *essential* and pure spirit of elevated poetry.

I think that the reasons which have kept me from Petrarchian emprises (with the exception of one or two sonnets written in youth) are, 1—Everyone has tried his hand at them, as a matter of course, and their name is legion; 2—In view of the matchless sonnets of Milton, Wordsworth and Keats, it scarcely seemed to me that more sonnets were really an "addition to literature"; 3—I am tired of the endless chains of analytic love-sonnets woven in these latter days at home and abroad. Mrs. Browning's "Portuguese Sonnets" have given me all I need of this, and the best of it—since Shakespeare.

But Rossetti was a *great* sonneteer—deep, noble, imaginative, passionate. That gloomy, glorious, Saxon-Italian hybrid!

To Charles Henry Webb.

November 27, 1885.

. . . Then we can confabulate over so many things—notably "Alec Dunham's Boat." As to the two versions—*I wish I had written either of them* and any English-speaking poet might wish the same. All in all, the one with the new stanza seems the best; yet there are touches in ye original which I don't think need or ought to be changed. You have improved stanza 2. In stanza 3, of course uniformity is a good thing. I suppose that no girl could lisp only

part of the time—unless she had false teeth and took them out now and then. You and I like the flash*es* and dash*es* better? There must be some way to change the first half of the stanza? Several other points let us discuss over my New Castle eighteen-year old rum, of which I have some *here*. Your new ending (3 stanzas) is very fine. Now look here! If you will print a small book of such lyrics, there will have to be a supplement to my "Poets of America," or it will not sell. I have named various bardlings therein of not one fourth your quality—probably because the mere insertion of their names did *them* good, while such recognition would be a poor courtesy to you—to John Paul, the Only. Remember what Talleyrand said to Madame de Staël, who asked him whether, in a drowning exigency, he would save Mme. Récamier or *her*. "Ah, Madame! you are so clever, that I should be sure *you* would save yourself."

To Edwin Markham.

January 17, 1886.

As you see by this circular, I break through a rule in speaking of your poetry. The reason is that its quality appeals to me. It seems, to me at least, truly and exquisitely *poetic;* and you send so little, and that so good, that one surmises you to have taste, and to be a critical judge of your own work. What I would say, however, is that these pieces are mostly in one key. You surely are not confined to this alone? Furthermore, can one obtain nothing, but an impulse for expression of the *abstract*, from a life on the "Pacific Slope." You see there are hopeful hints contained in these last two sentences.

To Andrew Carnegie.

May 13, 1886.

You certainly deserve the hearty thanks of every American for the ability, truth, and dauntless patriotism, which animate your chapters.

"Triumphant Democracy" is a remarkable work. Say what a purely *literary* man may of the *ex parte* quality of its statements, facts are facts, and here they are brought together with hammer-strokes. A good forgemaster, I see, has no time or occasion to be civil: the weapons are to be forged, and, if the sparks are dangerous, by-standers must look out for themselves. The book probably

will be criticised in England, somewhat as Sir Popinjay deprecated Hotspur, but it will be feared—and its lesson and moral will take hold.

I write this to you, because you are a zealous, outspoken, good fellow—and a most effective author—and with more radical and large ideas than other capitalists of my acquaintance. I will confess that I am a radical, a kind of socialist, with a general idea that no man should be permitted to accumulate a million dollars —under pain of death without clergy. But your career is a marvellous one; you are a genuine product of our "triumphant democracy," and have kept and increased your "humanities" along with your success.

To Thomas William Parsons.

June 25, 1886.

What shall I say concerning this delightful gift[1] from your hands, except that its arrival proves again that there is no link of gold between two hearts—though one be a knight's and the other a squire's—comparable to the good will of a bright and charming woman. And I think well of myself for having won the favor of your pet niece.

The points which you leave open, as to certain changes in the text of a lyric which I have long regarded as the noblest poem of its class, written by one of my own countrymen, are of real moment and interest. It is no light thing to lay hands on the Ark of the Covenant—to disturb the reading of a long established classic. As for my opinion of the queried verses,—that you should ask it at all, although a mark of exquisite courtesy on your part, renders it needful that I should summon the courage to make some answer worthy of your behest.

The one thing then of which I am *sure*, is, that your instinct is correct with respect to the fourth stanza. The poem *would* be, if possible, still more artistic and synthetically perfect by a closer conformity to the *Pace* legend of Dante's pilgrimage. Hence the words "Was peace" fully authorize your proposed substitution of a new eighth line. On the other hand—"the old man's"—this phrase in some way seems, does it not? to lower the dignity of your most dramatic and kingly figure to that of a lesser "old man"—to that of age alone. I know the pathos of simplicity, and that for

[1] An autographic copy of "On a Bust of Dante."

certain effects nothing could be stronger than your new phrase, or epithet; but there is a royalty, almost a superhumanity, pervading your ideal of Dante in this great lyric. Hence if you could say,

"Was peace—the exile's one request,"

the effect and line would be very fine. It is true that you have the word "exile" in the wonderful couplet in the last stanza. But that is a long way off, and you cannot use "wanderer" (which might be still better) unless you substitute some other word for "wandering" in stanza four.[1] All this detail, I know, has already been apparent to your own skilled taste, and of course the final judgment rests with you alone.

As you say "*one* request," does it seem best to change "single" to "only," even though "single" means "only" in a derivative and secondary sense? I think the force of "single" is great enough.

In the next stanza I think the retention of your original word, "betrays," is almost imperative. Otherwise you will have an alliteration (*rugged—reveals—repose*) that might add a grace to some weaker poem, but that might detract from the Doric strength, the *apparently* unstudied nobility, of your diction.

The only question as to the other proposed changes in this stanza is—Is the betterment sufficiently clear and unquestioned to warrant a new reading? Between "thought" and "dream" you and I are in doubt. That of itself recalls the maxim: "When in doubt, do nothing!" *Fell* does add a strength to the eighth verse; besides, it breaks up the present correspondence between the openings of the sixth and eighth.

There, my dear Dr. Parsons, I do not feel as if Giotto had handed me his brush, and begged that I would add a few strokes to his portrait of the Ghibelline—but as if he had shown me varying sketches of his own, and asked which of them appealed most to my inferior gift of appreciation. To this question, of course, I am bound to yield reply: especially when he enriches me with the gift of a copy with the master's own signature.

Having ventured so much, I feel emboldened to retain the *Ms.* of the poem—still in hope that you will fulfill your intention of sending me another final, "definitive" text, written by yourself,

[1] Possibly some adjective could take the place of "pilgrim" (sixth verse), and then you could say—"was peace—the *pilgrim's* one request." [E. C. S.]

from which I can and shall reprint an authoritative version in the "Library of American Literature" shortly to be issued.

To Horace E. Scudder.

October 5, 1893.

My most precious lot of autographic papers, next to my Poes and Brownings and Landors, etc., is a *series* of letters from Parsons (1886) anent that noble poem—to my mind the most effective American *lyric* thus far, taking it "by and large." With this series *I treasure* Dr. Parsons's last and definitive *Ms.* text of the poem itself, written with his own hand at my request, and after the slight revision to which I succeeded in making him confine his iconoclastic purpose. The text in the "Lib. Am. Lit." conforms exactly to that of his final judgment.

I must tell you that he was bent upon various changes, which for the most part distressed me. With unaffected reverence for the author of this "grand manner" poem, I nerved myself to remonstrate, and gave reasons for objecting to Cæsar's strictures upon Cæsar. He took my written protest in the courtliest and most artistic spirit, and finally made only the slight changes observable —in one of which I heartily concurred, the substitution of "dread" for "fell." His reasons for the other changes were clear to *his own* mind, as you will see by the extracts from his letters, copied for you herewith. I made precisely the same objection to the tautological IV: 7, 8 which, with your fine *acu tetigisti.* Possibly you had better ("would better," if your prefer, but I prefer idiom to "grammar") consider the poet's arguments and then follow your own best judgment. The two lines in most question are faulty, in that they do not meet *all* the difficulties and potentialities, thereby as they stand being a little below the noble perfection of the lyrical masterpiece throughout. It may be that one blemish is needed to emphasize the dignity, thought, scholastic passion, imagination, rhythm, sonorous diction, of its undying stanzas. I have "a good conscience," however, and feel that my own wasted life has not been *wholly* wasted, since I was permitted to divert our Yankee Tuscan from marring in his old age the almost flawless work of his impassioned and youthful prime.

Here followeth the transcription of a card from the *Athenæum* scribe:

"Dante's portrait, beginning, 'See from this counterfeit, etc.,'

signed P. P. P. In Boston daily *Advertiser*, Tuesday, Oct. 17, 1841."

Q. V., if you choose. And now let me tell you that this is my first *literary* letter since last Spring. I have drifted—drifted, and my land on shore has lain fallow. Whether it will bear more crops is a dark question, but you see that you have succeeded in making me answer your hail, and that I doubtless need just such a pick-me-up as you have artfully compounded—to set the blood flowing in my brains and to give me a slight wish to leave the wandering wave and see if there is anything still worth while upon terra firma.

To Miss ———

1887.

There is one sentence in your kind answer of the 11th which impels me to write just a line of comment. You say that you "seem to have so much more force of conception than power of expression."

Now if you will carefully meditate upon what I am going to say, it will be worth something to you in the long run. It took me years to find it out. And I'll wager that Mr. Browne will affirm its truth. Now, then: all young poets and creative artists labor under the illusion revealed by your foregoing statement.

The *fact* is that they have *less* of "force of conception" than of any other quality. They do not *conceive* originally or clearly. They mistake the glow and ardor of *desire* for the power of creation.

Mark my words: when you conceive *anything* with absolute *clearness* and *definiteness*, as nature and great artists do, *you will be perfectly able to express it.* The highest imagination is the most *practical*—the clearest—and *always* has apt expression at command. Without it, vague feeling and impulse go for nothing.

To the Editor of the *Post.*

March 26, 1887.

Sir: Will you kindly permit me to say a word in deprecation of a license by certain publishers—to wit, that of advertising books by printing extracts from private letters, and without obtaining a correspondent's assent. A year ago, in a letter honestly recom-

mending a manuscript to the manager of a Boston house, I spoke in high and justifiable terms of my friend the author. A personal and essentially private portion of my letter appears to-night, over my name, in very conspicuous type, as an advertisement in your columns and doubtless elsewhere: a violation, it seems to me, of both good taste and professional comity. I think it a bad piece of policy withal, and apt to lessen the force of any favorable comment which I might make, in the regular course of duty, upon the book thus advertised.

To Benjamin H. Ticknor.

April 5, 1887.

I had to clap a virtuoso-glass over this damnably exquisite handwriting of the great apostle of culture[1] in the Porktropolis by the Lake. But it was worth the trouble.

I did and do, strongly, advise you to take a book from this gentleman. My notion is that some publisher will seize upon and develop his selling-potentiality, and make the "paying" author of him that your firm so much needs. He is just the sort of man, methinks, that *Carleton* used to pick up and rush—e. g., Josh Billings, Artemus Ward, etc.

But I never dreamed of your asking him for a *novel.* I have seen scores of short sketches, skits, humorous poems, satires, etc., by him—*all* of which were original and "taking." I do not know whether he is the author of the famous "Lakeside Musings"—if so, so much the better. My notion was a vague one. But I think it shaped itself into this: that his *humor* was the business-card, and that you could get out a collection of his humorous *sketches* and *verses*, with an odd and effective title, and make a hit for both author and publisher. That would lead the way for other and more serious books. At the same time, pathos is an attribute of every true humorist, and very likely you could make just as good a first book of a selection (say one half) from the rather staggering list of tales which he sends you.

My suggestion would be that you should either send for the whole lot, or ask him to pick out 75,000 words of the best of them —making the selection as varied as possible. Then read them yourself or hire one of your slaves to do so, and see what they amount to. . . .

[1] Eugene Field.

To Arlo Bates.

August 29, 1887.

As I said—our first two days gave me a desire to confabulate with you again and often. When one is fifty, he begins to understand the maxim that it is wise to "recruit" our friendships—and you are still young enough to tempt the eye of the recruiting sergeant, at all events, you are "subject to draft." A fortnight's illness has knocked me a month behindhand with my work, letters, and poems. What an anomaly—a blot upon this fair island's face—is a sick man in vacation-time!

—I had got thus far, when friends came along, and, like Schiller's Immortals, never alone: the Clymers, Coolidge—and Mr. Parkman, whom I much wished to meet, having business with him. They are gone, and now I *will* write this letter in spite of the dinner bell.

For I wish to say, on paper, how much I am impressed by your penumbral sonnets—for I have studied them with feeling and sincerity, and for the time have walked with you through the varying deeps and gloamings of the shadow which these poems convey—the conveyance being, as I know, of itself in some measure a lightening. They illustrate what I once wrote—that the born author finds that, even beyond his will, life and *death*—his most sacred experiences—are auxiliary to the compulsive purpose of his art. They will and must be expressed. I do not care for the mass of our latter-day sonneteering, but the sonnet (especially a rosary or cycle of sonnets) is the form most suited to intensely subjective poetry—to the utterance and analysis of the finer shades of our most intense personal emotions and sensations. Your series has written itself—it comes from the soul, and as poetry isn't worth much, after all, except as a means of expression,—its value, in a case like this gauged by the worth of the maker, whom it expresses and who thus gives you for a moment a pass-key to the chambers of his inner life.

The art itself, in all such poetry, is "in proportion" with the thought and feeling—thoroughly so as respects these "Sonnets in Shadow." I believe that both for their technical beauty and their spiritual force, they will be valued by very many and will last as long as anything you have thus far written.

But all this sounds very stilted, and I am not in the habit of writing such didactic letters.

Mr. Whittier was here the other day, and I spoke to him of you. He said he had been reading a book of yours (which I have not yet seen) called "A Wheel of Fire," and that it was "a powerful work!" We think of him as a benignant old Quaker Bard, in the Land of Beulah, but he is a wide reader and a shrewd critic. If I were you, I would keep *in my* books, up to the level of such verdicts only; journalism, etc., is a good enough *tap* for one's lighter moods. I wish I were at your age, even with so much of Life's disciplinary weal and woe behind you, and with all such strength and chances, as you have for the future.

To ———

July 22, 1888.

I occupied last evening with a conscientious reading of Miss ———'s novel. . . . Such books, in sooth, are not of my seeking, and I am no fit judge of them. Perhaps I have outlived the zest of youth; yet things that are no less simple, but more strong, I still enjoy,—so that, on the whole, I suspect that there is something innutritious, if not unwholesome, in this mild "novel with a purpose." For a purpose it plainly has, and that is to teach the gospel of *old-maidism* and *morbid self-abnegation*. You know that I believe both of these to be "*agin natur*" and therefore to be discouraged. Were I reviewing such a book, I should be very severe with it, except that it seems to me pathetic—as a conscious or unconscious expression of the author's own sufferings and of the conventual philosophy to which they have subdued her. At the most, 'tis but making the best of a bad and unwholesome state of things. This sort of "blessings-of-sorrow" novel was the mode in the time of "Queechy," "The Wide-Wide World," etc.: a sickly fashion, which ought not to be revived.

I know that Miss ——— is a lovely and noble woman, and she writes very good English. The two characters of the indomitable old Lady and the selfish D. D. are pretty well drawn. All the rest are commonplace enough, and befit a Sunday School book for grown-up people. There are touches of humor—if there were ten times more, they would serve the book. By the way—what *is real* trouble? I observe that the saintly and high-bred heroine, is provided with a good *income*, at the outset, and that her troubles are all *sentimental ones*. Has the author sufficient imagination to conceive the real woes arising from a different state of things?

To Augustine Wilstach.

December 20, 1888.

I don't intend to let the Old Year "go down upon" any debts, and 'tis quite time I should thank you with sincere respect and gratitude, for the gift of your noble translation of the *Divina Commedia:* especially, moreover, and as a personal matter of indebtedness, for your giving these fair and scholarly volumes a further touch of individuality, by the hand and face of the begetter —set therein for my benefit. Must say at the outset that I have no claims to being a Dante scholar, in the right sense of the term. I am familiar with four or five English renderings of the great poem, and did write a criticism of Mr. Longfellow's—which with its *vraisemblance* of fidelity, seemed to me translated upon a wrong principle, and, with all its grace and charm to leave a field for future translators. I like your adoption of a stanzaic form which enables you to approach at least the *terza-rima* of the original, and at the same time gives the English reader a certain rest—assisting him to assimilate the meaning as he goes along. One can scarcely keep up with the sustained *interlacement* of Dante's rhythm, unless he is an Italian. You are equipped by nature with a fluent mastery of English verse and rhyme which, I confess, excites my admiration, and which has enabled you to carry your enormous task to the end without any apparent let-down. You have succeeded far better than I expected, and I am surprised at the seeming ease and rapidity with which you have completed a work that would take most people a lifetime. I don't know whether our New World readers will appreciate your labors at their worth; but they are most honorable to *you*, and I should think your translation would take its place among the most valued of English versions.— Your notes are excellent, and not too much of them. Possibly your Virgil was a little "over-edited" but this cannot be said of your Dante.

To Madison J. Cawein.

May 12, 1889.

I am fresh from looking through your pages, and have read your "Accolon" from beginning to end; a strongly sustained dramatic-idyl, and on the whole worth your composing—since Tennyson has given Arthur's mystic sister the go-by, and I don't

find echoes of his Idyls in your verse, but a manner different and quite your own.

Your lyrics, so notably rich in diction and color, are all of a sort to insure close attention from your brother-poets. That is indubitable. But many, while envying you your vocabulary and affluent command of rhythm, will feel that these will serve you more effectively when you draw on them with a certain eclecticism. A princess must have a varied wardrobe, with all rich stuffs from Cathay and Ind, but she dallies with her resources—not displaying all in one season, though serene with the consciousness of a reserve-equipment for the grandest occasion. If I had *your* equipment, now so thoroughly tested, and your years before me, I would utilize the former in some way specially *American*—however delightful we all find it to roam the fields trodden by those old-world minstrels who are nearest to the hearts of all English-writing poets. There is a chance, just now, for American themes and atmosphere, and for the poet who masters them.

To S. L. Clemens.

July 7, 1889.

Yes, I read your "Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court," last week—i. e., as soon as the package came to me—and didn't need any stimulus, either. Fact is, I went through it in two evenings with great wonderment and satisfaction—as completely out of my present world and its toils and troubles, as I was when I first read the "Arabian Nights." *Then* I was a boy of ten years, a Connecticut Yankee in the Court of Haroun al Raschid. There were two deaths in Old Judge Stedman's, my great-uncle's, house,—at Norwich, where I was "raised,"—and they had to filch and hide the "Arabian Nights" to make me wash up and go to the funerals.

After living out of the real world with you, for two nights, I had to go to the Chinese Theatre on the third, where I found equally unusual entertainment, and so let myself down easily to every-day life.

My belief is, on the whole, that you have written a great book, in some respects your most original, most imaginative,—certainly the most effective and sustained. It isn't so learned and pedantic as "Pantagruel" and it doesn't need to be—but why it should not be preserved, somewhat as Rabelais' work has been, even in this

age of endless bookmaking by "Type-Setters and Distributors," is more than I can see. Whether the ordinary critical reader will take in its *real* claims to *importance*, is a serious question. But here and there somebody will, and that somebody, soon or late, will open the senses of the dullards.

To some extent, this manuscript is an extension of the text called "The Prince and the Pauper"—and perhaps 'twould not have been written, or not written as well, but for that pioneer. . . . The little book was checkers: this is chess.

Some blasted fool will surely jump up and say that Cervantes polished off Chivalry centuries ago, etc. After a time he'll discover, perhaps, that you are going at the *still existing* radical principles or fallacies which made "chivalry" possible once, and servility and flunkeyism and tyranny possible now.

However, I am most impressed by the magnificently riotous and rollicking imagination and humor and often poetry, of the whole work. You have let your whole nature loose in it at the prime of your powers. Of course, when *you* let yourself loose, 'tis somewhat like a stallion just out of the paddock, but 'tis remarkable how finished, and in what good taste, your whole work—considering the theme and its possibilities—is. There is scarcely anything which I wished to change—in so long a book one finds a few matters *out of tone*, and to these I now refer you—fearlessly, in spite of your just anathemas scored against the typewriter. If you don't like it you may lump it!

I have handed, then, to Mr. Hall, the following notes, *all* I cared to make (after very close and hostile reading):

1. Sir Thomas Malory—*not Mallory*.

Page 34 (line 7) "*at myself*"(?)

Pages 34, 119, 120—"*soil a sewer*"—"*sewer*," "*try soap on a sewer*," etc. The illustration is poor and commonplace, the word offensive, the image not happily chosen. Unworthy of the writer. Too superlative—hence *ineffective*.

P. 127, etc., I presume you have thoroughly foreseen and are ready to meet, the holy horror of the Church in general, and the "Protestant Episcopal Church" in particular, at this and other matters here and there. You yourself bear down on the *dull persistency* with which both the oppressors and the oppressed stick to their systems. No matter how elevated your aim, how inoffensive your general meaning, the Church will say: Our title, like a

lady's name, shouldn't be made free with, etc. There will be various rows and rumpuses, but these, as I understand it, you calculate upon,—and will not lose your head, or try to explain, or *get mad over public stupidity?*

P. 139, "damned and welcome for all I care" a trifle out of tone for a Brother Jonathan.

P. 183, The peculiar early-manner—of Mark Twain-ish exaggeration, first half of this page is *out of keeping*, and mars the *vraisemblance*.

. . . . . .

P. 222, You have *queried* this page, but there is nothing on it which I object to in the least.

Pp. 383–84, It seems to me that a good deal of this *technical* humor (as I should call it) is rather a failure, and might be rewritten to advantage. The 4,000,000-lbs.-of-meat calculation is a lapse towards your very early manner. 'Tis important to be *in keeping*, near the climax and end of the book.

Nothing can be finer than the chapter where the Yankee Knight at Arms, in his new suit of mail, starts forth with the Damosel. Poetry and prose, by turns, and perfect as a whole. The entire story is managed with great skill, so as to seem quite possible, even probable, throughout. Personally, I have no doubt of its absolute truth as a narrative.

I suppose the *sale* of this unusual book will depend somewhat on the "working capacity" of your firm. But it will make a great noise, at all events, if sent to every prominent critical journal and newspaper here and in Great Britain.

To R. W. Gilder.

October 5, 1889.

On bringing your new sestet to the office, and comparing it with that in the volume, I am prodigiously surprised that you should think of substituting the new text for the old. At all events, I am not going to let you do so without a protest

The "proud surrender" / "gay and tender" } seem

to me exceedingly *weakening* to the Sonnet, and hackneyed besides. "Joyful the iron gates" is a trite inversion. Trite also is "Bright," and so is "tribute." In short, the original text is firm, strong,

and made with quiet dignity [1] all which virtues you sacrifice for the sake of a technically desirable couplet at the end.

It is at least, you will confess, an open question whether the new text is better than the old; and thus there is no *strenuous* excuse for *our* departing from the *standard* text for the "Lib. Am. Lit." Finally, my dear boy, I have no patience with a poet who continually revises and works-over his early poems. Let them stand *as they were*, and write *new* poems. That was the habit of the masters.

To Brander Matthews.

November 5, 1889.

That's a charming inscription in the gift-copy of this latest collection of those delicious "tales which you know how to tell so well"! But 'tis all awry in respect of your discipleship, proud as *I* should be to welcome the sweet illusion. When I watch your brilliant and masterful productions and look upon myself—handicapped and infertile so long—I see that the Roman proverb must be reversed—that we should say

Non discipulus, sed magister, est prioris posterior dies!

With which pedantic, but prodigiously true, declaration I am more than ever heartily yours. . . .

To Henry Holt.

November 15, 1889.

ECCE!

Ibsen appears to be the prevailing genius. Ibsen's dramas have made a great sensation in England. They are being presented in Germany. They will soon engage the attention of the Russians. They are booming in the United States. And an Ibsen Club has been started in Boston.

Ibsen may be said to have culminated. (From a newspaper clipping.)

Scissors!—I do bethink me that, about four years ago come St. Andrew's Day, I did offer unto a certain printing-house yclept Henry Holt & Co. The said Ibsen's most famous Play, "A Doll's House"—over which all London and Boston are now raving and debating. 'Twas well translated, too, by a scholarly consul at Gottenborg, and moved me to much admiration. And I did then

[1] The cæsural pause is good, after "flag," in the old version. [E. C. S.]

predict that the said Ibsen *would* find his way here in time. I wish you had the presumptive title of his "authorized American publishers."

The following reminiscence of Mr. Stedman was sent most kindly by Irving Bacheller:

It is now almost 22 years since I met Edmund Clarence Stedman. I had read much of his poetry and in a visit to England had heard Gosse and Dobson refer to him as a great critic. Over there they seemed to regard Stedman as a most just and penetrating judge of literature. I longed to know him and began to read his glittering essays on the poetry of the Victorian age. I had tried to write with small success but with a growing suspicion that one day I should find the thing I sought in myself. It was, I think, in 1887 that I finished a ballad and wrote begging him to talk with me about it. Promptly his answer came inviting me to his house. I went there about eight o'clock in the evening.

The poet had had a busy day in his office down town, and, dressed in a gray jacket with scarlet lapels, was reclining on a great sofa before the fire. He received me warmly and graciously and quickly banished my awe of him. In a moment he called for the "poem." I gave it to him very fearfully. He sat down by the table and read it aloud. I abandoned hope for it sounded foolish then. He went on bravely, pausing, now and then, for a word of kindly comment, and I am surprised and shall never cease to be grateful that he kept a sober face.

"Well, of course it's not a great poem," said he when he had finished reading. "It's a fairly good ballad—you needn't be ashamed of it. Any magazine like *Wide-Awake* would I presume be glad to publish these lines."

Then he went over it carefully, line by line, emphasizing its merits and defects and revising its punctuation. He asked me to sit down beside him by the fire, and began to tell me of his own struggle for recognition away back when the *Tribune* was the best medium of the poet and mere publication his best pay. I had gone there with the plot of a novel in my mind and soon his queries had uncovered the fact, and, encouraged by his interest, I began to unfold the plan of the story. He heard me to the end very patiently, and although it ran on for an hour or more he made me feel, at least, that the story held his interest.

"Your plot is new and excellent," he said at the end. "Go ahead and write the story and say nothing of your plot to anyone. When it's written let me have a look at the manuscript."

By and by I sent him the type-written sheets of the story. He read it promptly and wrote me a long review of it very kindly and overlooking no point of merit but recommending that I rewrite the tale. I know now how crude my work was and how gentle was his judgment of it. I knew then that his strength had begun to fail a little and that his time was precious and I wished to pay him for his work but he would only let me give him the price of a new smoking-jacket. After that he would send me some encouraging word of almost every tale or poem that I published. But he never gave me the full endorsement that I craved until my "Eben Holden" had been read and re-read by him. With what wholehearted generosity he stood by me then, many know. It was due in some measure no doubt to his great kindness and to the part he had had in the making of my small talent. Frankly, without his help I doubt if I would have had the courage to undertake even the little things which I have accomplished. I have never forgotten it and have tried one way or another, always ineffectively to pay my debt to him, but now I can only acknowledge it and that I gladly do. It may help the world to know that when he died it lost a *man* greater even than his poems.

To John Hay.

June 22, 1890.

And now, it being Sabba' Day and my family banished in midsummer mercy to Kelp Rock, I have the town house to myself, and can at last tell you how tenderly—for a tough old Grizzly—I am touched by the gift of your beautiful book, and by the letter which convoyed it.

It has brought back, for an instant, my own youth to me. I thought, indeed, that I was old when I first met you in 1861—with my wife and my children and my superior years of experience. Now, too late, I see that I was young, and knew nothing—and that you were very much younger, and knew a great deal.

So, like your own Heine, you have heard the rosy-cheeked boys saying to you—"Thou indolent old man, sing us again the songs of the days of thy youth!" This fair and full edition, a goodly thing to look upon, is your response. I have read it all through—

all your songs over again—and there is not one that I would wish omitted. My grievance is, after all, that what is my necessity has been your *choice*. Without my handicappings—you have shunned the track, and kept too much in the paddock. There is enough of seriousness, and tenderness, and reserved lyric strength, in these poems to make it a kind of sin against the Holy Ghost that—even in this age of *Affairs*—you haven't taken yourself more "seriously as a poet."

Still, this book, like Mercutio's wound, will serve. It lets out John Hay, his soul, as effectively, I daresay, as if 'twere twice as large.

It will last in our literature, and I feel that it has a certain differentiating distinction among the hundreds of American books upon my shelves. That I regard it with personal affection you know without my telling.

Clarence King—in whom Stevenson's Prince-with-the-Tarts is certainly incarnate—sailed yesterday. We have dined together, and confabulated, a good deal this year. Doubtless I shall run up Sunapee-ward in August, (being near by, you know), and spy out your land. . . .

From Hamilton W. Mabie.

October 23, 1890.

It is your misfortune to be "unduly exposed to literary persons," to recall Wellington's phrase. I suppose everybody sends you his or her new book. Now, I don't send mine because you are a shining mark but because I want to take this way of expressing my great regard for what you have done. I fancy if most of the younger men should compare notes they would discover that each had had some help from you. I have more than once said my say about your work but I wish I could find good occasion for saying how much I think all men who care for letters owe to the example of indomitable energy and high personal ideals which you have furnished.

To Oliver Wendell Holmes.

November 30, 1890.

My dear and honored Dr. Holmes: Enfin—a gift that is worth having! I, too, have a "hospital department" in my library—only *I* call it the "Chamber of Horrors"—and what a stream of

imbecilities flows to it continually! All the wards are crowded—patients three in a bed—every form of mayhem and disease, mental mayhem—*spiritual* disease, at hand for classical exhibition—and all the cases incurable. But I have a Chamber of . . . an offset, to whose numbers an addition is all too rare. What a pleasure, what an honor, to receive this guest, your new volume, with his warrant in your own firm and clear handwriting! Trouble and work have knocked, I fear, most of my old-time sentiment "out of time," but when your gift came in I felt the child's heart within the man's again—and it flutters at this moment with the same affection and reverence that moved it years ago.

"Over the Teacups" chances to be the book which I should most care thus to receive from your own hand. I have followed its chapters through the *Atlantic*, confessing again and again that custom cannot stale your infinite variety. I have read it with just as much *zest* as the Autocrat aroused in me thirty years ago. It *must*, then, be as much wiser and more imaginative than the Autocrat, by inversion, as my sensibilities are less keen and fresh than they were in 1858. In truth, this latest (may it *not* be the last) work of yours has a special appeal to a man of my years. You are an expert traveller in the Table Land which I am entering. Your clear sure Chart of it gives me courage—what is better, content. Yet I know very well that it is only a genius and a philosophy which are given to you alone that so enable you to sit down face to face with Age, and draw his portrait, and measure his body and soul. So long as a man's thought always flies forward—as his ideas and beliefs are still ahead of his comrades and his time—I know that *he* at least is immortal. I have just been rereading your Section X, ending with the poem *Tartarus*, and find myself reflecting on the change of moral temperature in "these parts" since "The Guardian Angel" made all the clerical cats arch their backs and spread their fur. You can well say of that change—*et pars magna fui*. But I have only room to say again that you have given me a very great pleasure, and that I am more than ever faithfully and affectionately yours. . . .

From Emma Lazarus.

June 25, 1891.

A thousand thanks for your generous letter just received. Knowing how pressed you are with overwork, I had not thought

of the possibility of *actively* interesting yourself in the fate of my translations. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your kindness and the trouble you have taken for my sake. I did not imagine when I left you the other evening that you could even find the time to look into my book before you left town. I am quite overwhelmed with your kindness.

I am glad to think you will so soon be able to throw aside all your city fetters, and rejoice and refresh yourself in your beautiful Maine woods. I am sure you work too hard and wear yourself out for the sake of others. I saw Mr. Gilder yesterday, who told me he had only lately been reading over your early letters to him. Such generosity and such stimulus as he had received from you, he seemed to have found *incalculably* precious.

To Katharine P. Wormeley.

March 25, 1892.

I am touched by your thoughtful remembrance of me and glad to have this admirably conceived and sincerely executed "Life" of your "great original," from your own hands. Doubtless every soul has its mission when incarnated (or reincarnated, if you choose) here. You were born and reared to interpret Honorê de Balzac to English-speaking people. No other one could and would have done so well. Inasmuch as this has been a purely disinterested work on your part, carried out with the true artistic subordination of a noble workman, your memory will henceforth be blended with your Master's.

On the whole this memoir written after so long service in translation, which has made you truly his "familiar"—is I *feel* the just showing of its subject. Your knowledge and your feminine, but thorough and wholesome, insight, have I believe given you the right understanding of Balzac's nature. But I think you get hold of him as a thinker and psychologist, and analyst of life, perhaps *more* sympathetically than as an *artist*—and above all, a French artist. But, in the end, you may venture even to interpret the grotesque and fantastic humors of his most un-English mood. You have done well to begin with his sister's narrative and to close with your own deductions obtained from all portraitures, letters, etc. I claimed in my paper on Poe, that every true artist is from his very devotion to the ideal, essentially and practically freer from common vice than ordinary men of business or action. . . .

"Look out for mannerisms. You have 'spendthrift' in two of these lyrics. Pet words are like other pets—a weakness. *My* pets have cost me sorely, and often. Well, I am now beyond the age of manly peril, and have not yet reached the quicksands of that *senility* when 'there's no fool like an old fool.' I am safe, for the present."

For the unveiling of the Tablet in memory of Esther Bernon Carpenter in the Harvard Memorial at Peace Dale, Rhode Island, October 9, 1894, Mr. Stedman sent this letter:

Esther Carpenter! Yes, I read some brief statement of her death at the time of its occurrence and with more than a passing regret. There was something deeply interesting about a woman, living her retired and localized life, seemingly unused to the literary atmosphere and usages, who had so thoroughly the instincts of the best literary artists. She took the life close around her; saw it as it was, yet idealized it and painted it with unpretentious mastery. She found, like all true observers, just as much tragedy and comedy, just as much passion and conviction, in this retired but most distinct community as in the best known centres of populous life. Her touch came to her by nature, just as it came to the Brontë girls and to our own Miss Woolson and Miss Wilkins. Her South County stories charmed me by their originality and by their veritable capture of the peculiar spirit of the locality in which she moved and had her being. Probably her range was limited, but how much better to do one thing uniquely than to be a copyist in many ambitious departments! In short, she was on her own ground, and made a real, if modest "addition to literature." I am glad she was not without honor in her own country and that you do not let her name and life pass without a memorial.

To Horace E. Scudder.

December 14, 1895.

Your "Childhood in Literature,"—written, of course, by the best "authority" on the topic,—did not go unread, if unacknowledged. It has the inevitable defect, in the closing portion, that it misses, through your delicacy, some account of your own books and your experiences with them and their readers. I am struck—

not having before reflected upon the condition—with your view of the trait which sophisticates American literature for children, and I am inclined to think that you are correct. American children, and the books written for them, are alike self-conscious, with various comfortable and natural exceptions. The most delightful thing in a child is, for us, its *naïveté*. . . .

"The younger men don't seem to understand that art and imagination are more rare than curious measures."

To A. W. Burt.

February, 1897.

I have been forced of late by age and overwork to give up miscellaneous literary correspondence. But your letter comes from across the border, and your kind expressions certainly deserve a share of "reciprocity."

A poem is like a jest's prosperity. It "lies in the ear of him who hears it." Hence the interpretation of a noble sonnet in the grand manner, like that of Keats's "Much have I travelled," depends somewhat on what the reader may put into it or see between the lines. For my own part, where there may possibly be more than one choice of meaning, I think the most imaginative interpretation is the one to be desired,—that the poet should be taken at his highest and best. Keats's imagination is especially distinguished by breadth and grand simplicity. It is one of the suggestive and universal rather than of the detailed and absolute type.

I think the key to Keats's meaning lies in the two lines which you do not mention at all, and which contain what I have always thought the most imposing imagery to be found in any poet since Milton:

> "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken."

Doubtless these lines came first to Keats when he sat down to write his sonnet, and the preceding lines simply lead up to them. To do this properly he required a high sounding opening,—"Much have I travelled," etc. By this and what follows I have always thought that he was not without experience of fine and rare things that appeal to the imagination. But hitherto he had not known Homer—he might have read Pope's and Cowper's translations, but had not known him adequately, had not realized how great and

elemental Homer was until Chapman fell in his way. That was the realization of a *new world* to him, as when an astronomer suddenly discovers a new planet, or as when for the first time the watery world beyond Darien broke upon the vision of an European explorer.

To narrow down Keats's meaning to the Homeric ocean and its isles seems to me too specific and obvious. Hamlet would have said of it as he said of the grave digger, "How absolute the knave is!"

The use of the word "serene" is characteristic of Keats, who, like Homer himself often substituted an attribute for the thing itself. Besides it was the very rhyme for him. In fine I think he only uses the ocean as a type of a creation beyond compare or bound. All this is simply a suggestion of the way in which the sonnet has always impressed me, and I do not consider it as in the least authoritative.

The following memorandum written by Mr. Stedman was found in a volume of poems by an English poet:

Doubtless it is unfair to judge of this poet without knowing his two preceding volumes,—which have such praise from the reviewers.

I would surmise, having this book alone, that possibly the author's fibre, personality, is a factor in his associates' enthusiasm for his genius.

First of all, he is entitled to the credit of *non-imitativeness*. His manner, method, thought, seem decidedly his *own*.

But one sees that he is praised especially for his style, diction, etc.,—for "the rare and difficult art of clothing thought in the true poetic language." Now, such is the art of Keats, Coleridge, Shelley, and often of later men—Phillips, Arnold at times, and others. It seems to me that it is the one thing missing from *this* volume. There are too many metaphysical polysyllables, often seeming to be *sought for*—not to have come of themselves. To my notion, metaphysics and transcendentalism are at the opposite pole from that of the divine and clear spirit of *poetry*. There is a want of *spontaneity* in phrases like "blossoming time outwrought," "God's refulgent fire," "Captivity previsioning," "supreme persuadence," etc.,—i. e. *in having too many of them*. I presume, however, that 'tis for just this kind of diction that this poet is specially liked by his own group.

Most of his poetry, thus, hardly seems "inevitable." But he *can* be *lyrical*, as many charming bits show, and if he would put on his *singing cap* more often, he would find it the token of advance.

Some of his things have real strength, such as the "Mors, Morituri" p. 23. "Aliquid Amari" shows that he could be a balladist. "To William Watson" is simple, pure, thoughtful,—*good*. "The Inquest" has terseness and truth.—But—let Mr. ——— get out of labored metaphysics.

To George S. Hellman.

April 18, 1899.

Your handwriting is wonderfully like that of my godson and old-time pupil, Harry Harland (Sidney Luska), so that it almost seems as if he were at your age again, and consulting me. That should be a good omen for you, because,—after suppressing for some years, with my aid, reams of highly imaginative but crude production,—he made a continuous success, dating from his first book.

Next to Henry James, he has as good a style as any man in London, and it was something remarkable that he should have founded *The Yellow Book* there with all its merits and defects, and gathered under his wing most of the bright literary chickens of that New Jerusalem.

I told your father of my regret at being ill the night you were here. It was absolutely necessary for me to be fresh for the next day's battle, and I was obliged to retire early. Since then, I have had so much worry and over-work that I could scarcely look at the various documents, your own printed circular included, which my secretaries have ventured to lay on my table. But receiving your personal letter to-night, I have read both the printed circular and your manuscript prospectus, and make no delay to write you in turn.

I see that you are going to back up your enterprise with capital; that being the case, I am inclined to think that you have a real field and may make it a success. *The Bachelor of Arts* has not quite filled the bill; one tires of its form, to begin with: and the editors, apparently, have found it difficult to maintain the standard of contributions for which they have been obliged to depend largely upon the good will of college alumni and undergraduates.

I fancy that you will be able to attract a less amateurish class of writers.

Having read your prospectus carefully, I think it a creditable production; but am wondering whether it is not a trifle longer than need be, and in places a trifle rhetorical. Emerson's aversion to the superlatives might apply to a few of the adjectives scattered here and there.

I have ventured to indicate by pencil marks two or three passages that you can phrase, by afterthought, a little more to your satisfaction. But I have no radical change to suggest. You plainly know what you are aiming at; and a magazine backed by your enthusiasm and individuality has every advantage over one managed by an editorial committee.

East and West as a name strikes us all as first-chop. My secretary approves of it on the score that the West has been pining and panting for recognition and a share in the game. The South gives nothing literary any real pecuniary support; and after all, everything north and south, in this country, is either east or west.

So the name, besides sounding well, covers the whole ground.

Certainly, add my name to those upon your distinguished list of references. It not only gives me pleasure to show my regard for you personally, but I am sure that you and Mr. Bradley will give a character to the magazine that will confer honor upon both its editors and its sponsors.

The memories of Mr. Stedman which are now given are contributed by Mr. Joseph Jacobs:

I got to know Mr. Stedman on my settlement in New York in 1900. I had brought him from England a letter of introduction from a distinguished man of letters, which he immediately honored by inviting me to dine with him at the Players Club, when we mutually took to one another. After dinner, he took me to his rooms and asked me to pardon him if he took a reclining position upon his sofa, as he was suffering from heart trouble. I was struck, as any one would have been, by the courage and gallantry with which he performed the duties of hospitality with the full knowledge that, at any moment, he might be taken away by the disease which ultimately removed him from his friends. That note was

characteristic of Stedman throughout my experience with him. However ailing he might be, or oppressed by work, he was always ready to throw himself into the plans of a friend as if they were the most serious aim he had in present view. I have known but few men who could throw themselves mentally into the position of another and dismiss all thoughts of himself with the desire to be of help.

For a man in his unique position in the world of American Letters—Stedman was exceptionally modest and appreciative of any attention from his fellow craftsmen. He showed almost excessive gratitude on my sending him a volume of my "Critical Essays." I happened to review his "American Anthology" in the New York *Times*, and he showed the keenest appreciation of what I felt bound to say of the skill and taste shown in his compilation. This struck me as a sign of true and genuine modesty in a man of his standing with regard to a few words of praise from a comparatively unknown critic.

Stedman was a man of business as well as critic and poet. He had the keenest eye for the commercial aspects of a literary plan and could give the shrewdest advice towards its realization. I told him in confidence of a somewhat novel scheme I had for a general encyclopædia which, in my enthusiasm, I thought would "scrap" all the existing works of the kind, and, while he was almost as enthusiastic as myself, he pointed out the financial and other difficulties in the way. Nevertheless, he took infinite pains to advise me as to the proper publishers to approach, giving me letters of introduction to several of them and in every way taking as much trouble in the matter as if the scheme were his own, or as if he were to benefit by its realization.

I should like to emphasize my own experience of his kindness to a complete stranger who had no claim upon him but a common love of English Literature. He took as much pains to smooth my way in literary circles in this country as if I had been connected with him by the tie of blood; yet I feel confident that he was only acting towards me as he must have acted towards hundreds of young literary aspirants, whether English or American, whom he felt he could help towards raising the tone of letters in his beloved country. Edmund Clarence Stedman loved literature with an undivided love and therefore he was willing to give his best to all those who shared his love.

From R. R. Bowker.

June 28, 1900.

When I was a young fellow beginning journalism and letters no one was so good to me as you—now Dean of American letters—and I remember particularly your two kindnesses in sending me as a "fellow craftsman" a copy of the first complete edition of your poems and in offering to father me at the Century Club, though with the thoughtful suggestion that as a younger man I should bide my time and let the elders on the waiting list have a better chance. When later opportunities came, I had so many club relations that I have never become a "Centurion," but I remember with peculiar pleasure your kind offer. I have never felt that I had done any work in writing worthy to send you until I found time to put some thought and work on my *parvum opus*, "The Arts of Life," which I am now sending you with my affectionate gratitude and all good wishes. I think that nothing has been more creditable to you, in your many-sided career, than the sympathetic interest which you have always taken in the younger men—as I have such pleasant reason to know myself, and certainly the love of many of your juniors goes out to you with the hope that your later days may be again free from illness and pain, and rich in the opportunities of leisure.

"Our younger verse-makers have not yet struck their gait, and it is not clear what is to be the next genuine field of poesy."

In answer to a letter a secretary of Mr. Stedman wrote:

"The poet," when I read him your letter, (he is confined to his bed, and cannot read for himself), said "Well, there are books, downstairs; you know what they are; but I never read one of them." "If I could only talk with Mrs. ——— ten minutes," he continued, "I could set her right." Now I shall try to tell you the things he wished to say, and substitute these for the "list of books."

You do not need to read and study books of technique, for your natural ear will regulate the music of your verse, and your feeling will find its own forms. Study, however, the masters of verse—study Tennyson, being careful, however, not to become Tennysonian. Analyze his work, and see what it is that renders it so perfect. Observe that the frequent use of rhymes ending in *ing*, and

similar weak, commonplace endings, renders verse characterless. Examine the use of vowel sounds in a line.

But not less important than the reading is the writing. Write freely—rapidly—as you feel inclined, but *then* study your work. Don't let it go from you until it is perfect. Not that there is not danger of over-working also. For every Scylla one avoids, (this sentiment is my own—not the poet's) there is a hungry Charybdis swirling near at hand; but Mr. Stedman has confidence in the freedom and vigor of your expression and believes that its force will maintain the essential beauty of your thought even though you *labor* to perfect the form.

To Hamilton W. Mabie.

January 25, 1901.

I can't refrain from sending you, for my own satisfaction, a single line of unstinted admiration. While in Bermuda, I found in a newspaper an extract from your Shakespeare book containing the passage on Falstaff which begins: "Shakespeare created a kind of English Bacchus," etc. Now, I want to say that I never have found, before, anything so good upon Falstaff, *by whomsoever written;* nor any finer and stronger English writing. It is nobly and originally done, and moves me to expect better work than ever from your pen—if you will only *make* the time for such condensation and thought-moulded expression. You now can well afford to do so, even at the temporary loss of some little income. It will tell in the end, and lift you straight to the place where you naturally belong. Before the Spring comes, I shall read every word of your *Shakespeare*, you may be sure.

To Josephine P. Peabody.

February 11, 1901.

I am not yet writing you my own feeling, "in respect of" your drama and the other leaves on your green bough,—for I have not been home from "remote Bermuda" long enough to meet my less ideal obligations. But I can't deny myself the pleasure of trying to be your welcome messenger. The enclosed slip may save me from the fate which, in Gérôme's painting (Second Empire School) came upon "The Bearer of Ill News." I am as vain as Pumblechook, now that I find my own estimate (A. D. 1899) of your quality outvied by that of our oldest and rarest minstrel, of our

surest and most impartial critic of English song—the one most familiar with its course from Surrey's time to our own. Old, blind, but Elizabethan and lyrical as ever, Mr. Stoddard has been, of a verity, touched by your notes, or he would not rise to pay you such courtly honor.

To the Same.

December 15, 1901.

I have read and re-read and read again your noble Tragedy of *Marlowe*. You should see how I have pencil-marked my copy. The truth is that I could not properly "take in" this work, when you read portions of it to me—to me sitting like a Roman Caligula after an evening of supper and talk. In its boldly-printed synthesis I now have more fully grasped its structure, and am "woundily" impressed by its strength, imagination, splendid diction. Girl, you come nigh to having achieved a masterpiece. Indeed, I believe you have done so. If so, it is going to be found out, even in this "ignoble age." I shall wait to see what the immediate reviewers say about it. Meantime, and until further advices, let me at once confess that you have justified your temerity in your choice of theme. As an American I am proud of your work.

To W. C. Lawton.

March 20, 1902.

This matter all seems very fair, intelligent, and on the whole correct. I have made one or two comments in pencil—of no serious importance. So there must be another American Literature text-book! I think that at least half a dozen have come to, or have been purchased by, me within as many years, and they all "read" so much alike that I scarcely can tell one from another. Still, as Mr. Weller said, "if we don't have funerals (and cemeteries) what'll become of the undertakers?"

To R. W. Gilder.

Palm Sunday, 1902.

This occasion for writing you shall not pass without my adding a "receipt" and affectionate thanks for the inscribed copy of your beautiful book of "Poems and Inscriptions." It has been on my little night-table, in this winter-lodge, all the past season, and I have read more than once every line of it. For although it is not

one of those volumes (like "The New Day" and "The Celestial Passion" and your book of "Lyrics") by which a new reputation is sure to be made, it is precisely one of those which often are most significant to one's fellow-makers, especially to one's lovers and *intimes*. The short song-bursts, the bits of verse expressing mood and impressions of the moment, show to an expert a poet's technical quality, and—as in the cases of Byron, Landor,—even Lowell —are as dear to other artists as the drawings and "sketches" of a painter's studio. Then, too, their *personal* element brings them straight home.—There is more of sympathy with country-life and "Nature" in the first of this collection than you had when in Dante's empyrean: that comes from being a farmer-boy of Tyringham. I have wondered why the ocean did not seem to get a strong hold upon you during your years down East. Finally, I wonder if you have read Howells on Poetry in the March *Harper's*. Yes, and I like your poem, and surmise that you lengthened the closing line of each stanza to match the predestined closing line of the last stanza.

To Mrs. J. P. Willits.

April 6, 1902.

It is impossible to say when a poet is closely logical in his imagery and in the sequence of his thought, and when he writes certain passages because fine diction, utterance and rhythm, have "come to him" and he can't bear to leave them out. But in the case of the stanza, "Twice I have moulded," etc., I think Emerson found these fine effects best suited to the "argument." Nature is singing the wondrous story of her progress through *Evolution*, from star-dust up to sentient *Man*. She has made various types of man, but not yet (on this Earth) her noblest, her culminating and perfect man. She has made the races of the Day (the white man) and those of the Night (the black man) and those of the sand-beached islands of the Sea (*possibly* the Australasian or Polynesian?); but she prophesies that in time she will arrive at her perfected "sun-burnt" type. From this type beings greater than Shakespeare, Plato, even Jesus, may spring, and inspire the future "lords of creation."

That would be my guess, if I needed a perfectly logical and consistent rendering "in the concrete," but for one I should be quite content to accept this one stanza as an interval of mere imagina-

tive and sonorous *poetry*—all the more forcible for whatever the *reader's own imagination* may put into it.

To Brander Matthews.

April 16, 1903.

What you think of me, by this time, I can well conjecture! But in truth, I have had an unexpected rush of duties, functions, letters, and private troubles. Though I promptly and fully went through this entire list of "Contents" for your new Anthology, I simply have been *unable* to carry out my wish to answer you at once.—Now, hoping I am not quite beyond time, I'll try to remember the general and particular things that came to me.

First—I don't see exactly what you are trying to do. "Familiar Verse" is not *me judice*, necessarily *vers de société*. The entire range of American Familiar Verse from Pierpont's "Stand! the ground's your own" to Stoddard's "There are gains for all our losses" is mostly quite a different thing, is it not? I see touching, tender, or pretty, familiar verse on your list that is idyllic, but severely "patrician," "modish," "*elegantiæ*," "*belles choses*," "bric-a-brac," "quality," "debonair," "lightly-touched," and so on—to use epithets I have applied. On the other hand, you have taken much that represents the best of what we have done of the sort—such as Holmes's "Last Leaf" (preëminent), Mitchell's "Decanter" (nothing better), Aldrich's "Thalia" and "Intaglio Head." To my mind, it is a pity that you don't have Aldrich's "Palabras Cariñosas" so exquisitely turned; but, from my own remembrance of Aldrich and the "American Anthology," I am sure that he must have stipulated that you use pieces he thinks less "familiar" to his lifelong readers. This brings me to my own case. I am pretty sure you have my last book of "poetry," "Poems now First Collected"—in which is "Cousin Lucrece," which is the most genuine, most humorously pathetic, and best-turned, bit of *vers de société* (in the Locker-Holmes-Dobson sense of the term,) I ever wrote or shall write. Why, then, do you follow slavishly in the tracks of Bryant-Coates anthologists, or take pieces too familiar and less suited to your purpose, instead of "Cousin Lucrece"? Arnold's "Beer" and Webb's "Dum Vivimus" are A 1—the latter is great. Your choices from the younger poets, of course are all right—so far as I know the things (I am away from my books). As for the 18th and early 19th centuries—of course you have to use just the

things you have selected, and nearly all of which I find in the *Lib. Am. Literature* or in the *Amer. Anthology*, and they are good. I am glad you have represented Leland so well. After all, my chief criticism is a dislike of your vague, generic title of "Familiar Verse," as equivalent to Society-Verse. Surely you can invent some new and pretty name to cover the *varied* contents of your book. I don't know whether your book is for some publisher's "series"?

From Ridgely Torrence.

September 17, 1903.

There has been delay in the sending of my book to you because I wanted first to write in it. As I send it, I think of all its history, of the day I appeared at "Casa Laura" with it and found you on a sick bed. I think of how you read it as best you could during that illness and then I remember that Sunday a few weeks later when you were first able to sit up and to be about a little and you walked with me through the blazing sun of late June to Mr. Moody's and did what you could to find me a publisher. Do you think I shall ever forget it? Everything good, everything worth while, all the real things that have come to me since I went to New York, seven years ago, have come through you. Through you I met all the friends I have since known. The longer I live the more I realize what you have done for me. In your heart, I think you accuse me of being selfish and ungrateful but in that respect you do not understand me. I confess that I have been outwardly careless, but I assure you that it was a surface irregularity of my nature and that never since that first day of our meeting when you received me so generously and cordially into your confidence and friendship have I felt other than the most sincere and perfect devotion and admiration for you. Some day surely I will be able to begin in some measure to repay you. I do hope you have been well this Summer and free enough from care and worry to make poetry.

To Ridgely Torrence.

September 24, 1903.

I am *deeply* touched by your very beautiful and intimate letter. Its impulsive expressions, in regard to our relations from the beginning until now, are altogether more than I could ask for. In exchange for my grumpy counsels and appreciation and fault-

finding, you are one of the few who have given me not only of your "youth" and "love," but companionship; and "even God can give," little more, and nothing better, to the old. Anyhow, you now repay me a hundredfold, by taking your life and art seriously, with the "sanity of true genius." You have had quite a fling, and now are developing what I called will-power—lamenting its absence in Pope. At your age, and at *this* most inspiring age of America, there is nothing which you cannot master, provided you are superior to despondency over occasional defeats, to wild elation over a success.

There are magnificent lines and passages, in "El Dorado." The *Prologue* delights me; it sets the work right up at the outset, with superb verse, diction, imagery. Bravo! I judge a poet at his best. You could not have sounded this "five keyed" horn before you began to write the drama which it now heralds. It portends what you will do in the future.

I have written my thanks and views to Mr. Paget, and as I have no journalistic medium, I have enclosed to him a condensed judgment of "El Dorado," for use on covers or in advertisements, or in any way he may think serviceable: this by way of putting myself on record and perhaps of calling more attention to your book.—I see you have touched up the verse of the drama here and there. Your publisher's press-note should have omitted the "undertaker" business; in the end you will stand more *permanently* for a certain aloofness and dignity—I don't mean bumptiousness, but a maintenance of good taste. Every cheap novelist has his little day of claptrap journal press notices.

The Harlands are in town for a day or two. I saw them in Norwich. ——— called on me, *en passant*, and I never saw her look so well and womanly. Poor ——— who received you first at Casa Laura, died after giving birth to a child last month.—I suppose my clan will soon gather again, and that this will be an eventful Winter for some of its liegemen and women. Laura is hunting rooms for me to-day. Last month I wrote my first long article in years, and lead off the November *Century;* not literary, but interesting.

To Clinton Scollard. April 12, 1904.

Your "Lyric Bough" is the leafiest and most tuneful bit of Nature that thus far has graced our country side this belated Spring—

though robins, bluebirds, etc., are in evidence, much bewildered that their trees still remain unclothed. You have hit upon a fresh and charming title, for this latest group of your improvisations—a word which implies what seems to me one of their most attractive effects, though of course I well know that often the song that appears most artless has had the master's patient art. E. g., I am not a "master," yet I have written one stanza of my St. Louis hymn forty times over before I could get it to read so easy that people will think it done offhand.

Your bough, I see, as if from Dodona, flourishes through the year—from sap-time to sap-time, and now I'll tell you which singing leaf of all *I* like the best. It is the Gypsy Wind, which has a way of its own, goeth where it listeth, and very straight to the heart of one town-bound drudge longing for the wind on the heath.

You have become a Centurion in surprisingly quick time, only ten months after nomination. Learning that you had "passed the Committee," I went to the monthly meeting of April 2nd, and saw you safely elected and *ought* to have wired my congratulations, but I thought Sherman would attend to *that*. I need not say how pleased I am at the result of our campaign. The old minstrels of the Century, *my* compeers, are falling out so surely, that there will be none to give *us* the meed of melodious tears unless we gain now and then a successor like you.

To Tudor Jenks.

October 30, 1904.

As I intimated to you the other night, you had unwittingly caused me to forego about a third of the "nine hours prone" to which Senex was doomed by his physician. But that third, in which I was young again with Chaucer in England; springtime, was worth far more than sleep—John Smith, M. D., braces up my old body with his tonics, but your dear and wholesome transfusion of the sun and air of Chaucer's out-door times is that which "ministers to a mind diseased."

I find your little book delightful, in its naturalness, ease, vivid depiction that of course is underlaid with knowledge of the subject as thorough as it is unpretentious. Doubtless no one but yourself could have written it in just this style; which will appeal to both young and old. I am pleased, too, by the imagination, which follows Dan Chaucer through all the changes of his life that were

so noteworthy as to be "of record," and then depicts the scenes and activities naturally attendant. I'll take my oath, if hailed to Court in your defence, that all this story really happened. And, as to the historic chronicle, I have it more consecutively in mind than ever before.

One is always suspicious in advance, of a new "Series." But yours—of which I blush to say, I was so tardily aware—has a method and value of its own, and I look forward pleasurably to the outcome of your days (and nights) with Shakespeare.

Your chapter on the dwellers in Arcady is beautiful. The one preceding it, however, ends in such wise that I should be ruled off the stand as a prejudiced witness in your case. I am glad and proud that my two stanzas have at last found a use, and gained the heart of a friend, but, I have learned a lesson which would have served me well in early life. *You* never would have been guilty of Gil Blas's blunder with the Archbishop! Think of Hazlitt's being forced to wear his Christian name, on page 264, while close by, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton admit to their kingly procession of the initialless.

Your overpowered, dazed, but grateful and never-before-so-toplofty

"STEDMAN"

Mabie, in his preface has nicely caught the feeling of your style and subject. It is in his best vein. I suppose the last sentence (which seems anticlimacteric) was necessary to the Series.

To Florence Earle Coates.

December 29, 1904.

My generous Woman-friend, my Poet rare and fine: Your book with such distinction throughout, and with its felicitous title, has just reached me, and it is impossible for me to put into words my emotion as I see that you have given me more title than even your warmest votaries to inclusion within the golden "liberties" of "Mine and Thine."

My dear lyrist, you,—than whom no woman of selecter station, no singer of more noble aim,—have conferred upon me what I recognize, and what all will pronounce, to be the richest tribute I ever have received.

That *you* should say to the world that even the smallest portion of the love and comprehension which you gave to Arnold you are

willing to extend to me—this, I say, puts me out of language for humble thanks and wonderment. But my deepest feelings certainly go to you in return. None, save your husband, knows so well as I what a largesse of sympathy, admiration, remembrance, the genius of Arnold and the heart of Arnold have obtained from you. That I, who—if only for my waste of the last few years—am not worthy to kneel by his grave, should have you strive to lift me has unsealed the fountains of my aging eyes.

Then, too, the beautiful sonnet, which—in spite of the unworthiness of him who at least has lived to give it cause—has become a classic, consecrates this volume of your perfected song, for me and mine, beyond other books in which I have had a personal association.

I can say no more to-day, except that I tried to visit you in the summer and could not. Afterwards I could not even write you. Your letters have been always with me. I shall write you soon. The Sharps (Mrs. Sharp you would love at sight—a womanly woman) were at Bronxville with us on Thanksgiving Day, and regretted they must sail from Boston without visiting Philadelphia. The next morning I came to New York, and "Mine and Thine" must have reached Casa Laura after I left, as it comes to-day in a parcel with other books. Your dedication moves me greatly, as you see by my wild and wandering words. May I dwell in your starlight to the end!

To Ridgely Torrence.

September 7, 1905.

. . . Nor did I say much of your *Atlantic* poem, "The Lesser Children," because, though it had just come in, I had not fully read it. I now have done so, and am quite carried away by the surprising mastery of diction, rhythm, melody, imaginative flow of verse, at which you have arrived. There is a flooding splendor of technique throughout beyond anything, certainly, that I have ever possessed, and in which I doubt if you have an American rival. The poem is "sensuous and passionate"; it is not "simple." Its one failing is that which alone prevented Swinburne from being the greatest poet of his time. Yet it is superior to much of his lyric utterance in showing no trace of *exertion*—no straining to be heard, it comes of itself, like the notes of some singer with the natural voice that sings as richly and easily as others speak. Now

that your *expression* is so fully at your command, wreak it henceforth upon your thought—i. e. reverse the process attributed to him who "wreaked his thoughts upon expression." Do so, my dear Ridgely, even though this preachment is that of a lessening oracle, and you will be a bard indeed, and put an end to the foolish plaint that Poetry can be of worth no more.

To R. W. Gilder.

November 2, 1905.

The little collection of which your "In the Hights" forms the title-poem is worth as much to me as any of its predecessors; for, as I grow older, I really believe that such a cabinet of the impromptus, epigrams, "ejaculations," of a mature poet and personality, has almost the rarest of values as an expression of himself. It is you, as you are, that I listen to when turning the leaves of this dear little book. Your best critic will be the one who sees,—whatsoever the finish and sustainment of some earlier, more studied, volume,—this one has the easy art of the Master—who improvises at will, as the vision comes to him. Nothing can excel spontaneity, after all, as the warrant of a singer. There are symptoms that, even in these times, the number of those on whom your quality as a born poet has taken hold, has become of such importance as to assure for you your full meed. I, so long repressed in what I care to do, wish I had the power to swell that number to heart's content.

To Kenneth Brown.

June 25, 1906.

I am in much tribulation this morning owing to your Oriental devices. "By the Beard of the Prophet!" You have caused me tumblings and tossings through the night and afflicted me with a weary head this morning. Why did you not at once send me some of the green poison from your ring and make an end of it!

Yesterday for the first time in six months I felt like a new man, having had several nights of natural sleep. Laura and I went up and dined at Claremont just as if we were of the same age and not of one blood. We walked home by starlight and I said, "Now I will have another night's sleep and begin the world anew," but when I reached my new quarters I saw your book lying with Beatrix Lloyd's last story beside my arm chair and cast lots in my mind as to which I should read first.

The lot fell to Beatrix, but first I took just a look at your opening chapter. Bismillah! The first three pages were enough to entangle me as a lion of the desert is captured by a net. The result was that for three hours I walloped in the meshes of your absolutely preposterous and perfectly fascinating story, and did not turn in until I broke through the very end of it. Hence the nocturnal tossings and this morning's befuddled head.

For pure entertainment I have come across nothing better since the days of Anstey's best. If there were not so many books of all sorts put forth every week I think "Sirocco" would have as good a sale as "Vice Versa," for example. Of course you know that I hope it will in spite of the setback you have given me. I am particularly struck by your portrayal of a typical American upon the lines commonly followed in foreign descriptions of our nationality; I am struck still more by your apparent mastery of all the Oriental subtleties. I did not know that you had resided in the East, or even visited there. But I can understand that there may be a transfusion of the mystic Oriental spirit experienced by one who has joined his existence with that of a "Greekling."

Pray make my sincere obeisances to the Princess and tell her that at the first opportunity I mean to "salaam" to her in person. So let me know when you and she come to town again so that I may call upon you and also ask you both up to see my new hermitage.

To R. U. Johnson.

July 25, 1906.

I make speed to return your Ode [1]—all the finer for being written in the white heat of feeling aroused by a great immediate event. I have nothing but admiration for its elevated tone and structure throughout. This being so, of course I do nothing but recur to your wish that I should look for any weak lines or passages. Even in these details I see nothing that I would venture to change. Your use of the word "compare" is a little unusual even in archaic precedent; at least the pronoun "this" before it makes it seem so. But I should have no hesitation in retaining it.

In your third strophe your terminals "reprisal" and "despisal" are rather far apart for the ordinary reader, but not for your fellow-poets.

[1] "Dreyfus."

Well, an ode must be rather correct in technique, for one so quickly written, if I can find no more fault with it. There is one point not technical to which I might call your attention. You greatly venerate Justice in your first line and in the line before the end of the poem, but in the eleventh line of your opening you make Justice anything but dignified and vigilant, and however true it may be that Justice at times does nod, "With good capon lined," it does not seem to me that this should be alluded to at the very height of your pæan; in fact, the phrase "comfortable Justice nods" is the only one that seems a little out of keeping with your high argument, it being a supreme triumph of Justice that you are celebrating. It doesn't seem to me that Justice nodded when Dreyfus was crucified, but that Justice herself had been bound and gagged by mailed hands.

Very likely this may never occur to anyone else, nor do I think it mars the integrity of the poem.

To Zona Gale.

December 12, 1906.

Dear me! My! My! A whole month has passed since I received "Romance Island" one afternoon and gave it a first reading in the next two evenings. Yes, and within a week read it over again as critically as possible, word for word, having been too much engrossed by the charm of your fantastic narrative to think about its technical qualities or even about its author—except when I ran upon phrases and pictures that no one but her would have dreamed of.

My impulse was to write you at once with the whole thing fresh before me, and in fact I began to do so, but was shunted off by the incoming season with its personal and professional exigencies. Laura is now clamoring for the loan of my copy of "Romance Island," and I'll not put off till another day this letter of warm approval and congratulation.

It is the simple truth to say that your romance is far beyond my expectations and of a sort that I had not quite looked for from you. I now reproach myself for not having realized that all your years of both utilitarian and ideal pen work—in mere bulk far beyond what I, for instance, have ever found time to produce—have matured you as a skilled writer, who can summon imagination at her will, and at the same time hold it well in hand. You are a poet,

and I confess to have written more than once that poets cannot invent their own tales. It is their mission to sublimate traditions and plots already existing. Great novelists have rarely in the past written good poetry. The present generation seems bent on stultifying my opinion, for our born poets successfully exploit their imagination and fancy in prose romance. I have not seen a more striking instance of this than in your case, since Charles Kingsley charmed my generation with "Hypatia" and "Westward Ho!" Your story, after its realistic opening, is creative, fascinating and withal highly poetic. I myself delight in wonder-tales, since my five-year-old reading of the "Odyssey"; they beguile me from this weary work-a-day life; while character-novels sometimes add to my weight of care.

Some of your previous work has been so diaphanous, if I may use the word, that I had no idea, exquisite as it was, that you could make a pure fairy-tale so life-like, real, and absorbing. I think Stevenson—were he living—would yield himself to and tell you of the charms of "Romance Island," "even as I." Notwithstanding the ceaseless flood of clever stories now-a-days, I suspect this, your first book, will gradually differentiate itself and receive more of the favorable criticisms which already have appeared.

The fact that you are a poet and have become an artist in the exquisite task of rhythmical construction has given you an artistic prose style. Added to this, my experience and insight render it probable that you have studied one or two French masters to decided advantage. Some of your *pittoresque* work is very beautiful; for example, pp. 126–129, 166–168, 249–254, 301–303. I like your style very much throughout, but I do discover, here and there, certain relics of your early preciosity, which I adjure you to free yourself of by every effort hereafter. You already have a good vocabulary in the 300,000 words of our English tongue, which numbered only 100,000 when I was your age. You are not going to distinguish yourself by your efforts to coin new verbs, howsoever legitimately. While you have not gone so far as Miss Lloyd and others in these artifices, let me tell you plainly that I detest such expressions as "Amory glimpsed the Prince," "enough to fleet the time," "to homage them," "never marvelled its way," "Had gnarled," which, here and there, seem lugged in of malice prepense. This is really all the fault I can find, but to my mind it

is a grave one. Congratulations on your success in straightening out the Bobbs-Merrill business. I thought you would use the little file to loose your fetters if I slipped it secretly into your dainty hand. Well, publishers have no rights that we authors are bound to observe. (See Dred Scott decision, U. S. Supreme Court.) Chinka has come in and at last carries off "Romance Island."—Your affectionate Papa. . . .

From W. D. Howells.

December 31, 1906.

I want to recur to what you said so generously about the high level of so much now done in magazine verse and prose. It shamed me that I had sometimes carped at our youngsters' work, and I want to make an Easy Chair from your point of view. Do you mind? Of course I shall not be personal.

Meantime I am working hard at my paper on Longfellow. How difficult it is to say simple things! The complex things are so much handier, and wind can be got into one's words almost without trying.—But there are two or three of his laterish poems, like *Changed* and *Aftermath*, that I feel to be absolute emotion, not charm. How to put it!—Between my trousers and my waistcoat this morning, while I was dressing, I suddenly thought, why the imaginative in a poet is not so much what he imagines as what he makes *me* imagine. Heigh?

I wish I knew the afternoon hour when I should disturb you least. I should like to take my walks as far as your convenient ground floor. We have been friends for 46 years; we shall not know each other as long, here; why not meet now and then?

From the Same.

March 1, 1907.

I hope you may see the March *Harper's*, where, in the Easy Chair, you will find a real treatment of the subject of fugitive verse which came up between us the day I called on you. It is one that would bear much deeper and more sober inquiry; but I think I am right in my conclusions. So, dear friend, the fellows and fellowesses of this day are not the peers of us in ours. It is a source of great pride with me to think that when I was trying my best and you were doing so much better we were not of the latter day

make. You had a distinct voice in verse, a brave gayety, a lyrical splendor, such as no other of us could rival you in. If ever I could get the time I should like to study that series of pieces—the Pan in Wall Street sort—in which you were like yourself and like nobody else.

Well, we lived in a great time. If we have outlived it, so much the worse for this time.

You gave us all a great joy this afternoon. I kept looking at you, and thinking, "Well, he is as handsome and gallant and blithe as when I first saw him."

To Ridgely Torrence.

December 31, 1906.

This is a line simply to tell you that you are in my remembrance on this—the last day of "my most immemorial year"—and to wish you the happiest year, A. D. 1907, that you ever yet have had. And, in sooth, I know no man who has a more fair prospect, or a more fairly won right to expect the good things Allah *some times* gives to poets and men. You have *worked* as well as dreamed, have strengthened and perfected your hand and soul, and they who tell the world what's what recognize this and are speaking out for you.

I have not yet, under the holiday pressure of things and visitors, completed my reading of "Abelard and Heloise" but shall soon do so, and get you here to dine and talk it over. I also have the beautiful torso of poor Harry Harland's unfinished last romance. I see that Moody has a superb poem—"The Death of Eve;" also, have read the opening of Miss Sinclair's novel, in the *Atlantic*, and find it quite stunning in its understanding of "mere man." No little spinster has had such knowledge of our sex, since the time of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

I threw up the sponge, in sheer impotency to cope with Christmas this year, but I wished to write you this note.

As your penmanship has gained, mine has lost, you see, a kind of Dantean Metamorphosis.

To Percy MacKaye.

March 9, 1907.

Quite the most significant and essential gift that reached me Christmastide was your "Jeanne d'Arc" with its inscription and

your letter. I read it with eagerness, feeling that this noble and "available" drama—with its combination of high poetic quality, and the requisites of an acting play—must stand as almost the first full verification of a prediction made by me thirty years ago. I am glad to have lived far enough into the twentieth century to see the rise of a young, inspired phalanx of American poets, impelled by instinct and no less by conditions to composition in the highest of poetic forms. Our country has had a period when poetry went more directly than now to the hearts of the people at large, but we never have had writers who were more absolutely poets than Moody, Mrs. Dargan and yourself, and I think that Torrence is just on the edge of something very fine.

Your "Canterbury Pilgrims" and "Fenris, the Wolf," while in a sense too remote for the present stage, were of course the forerunners of your present work. They were like the Prix de Rome canvases, whereby young painters demonstrate and assure themselves of their progress in composition upon a broad and sustained scale.

They tell me you are at work upon still another drama. I am greatly content to see the worldly success of one, who, in so unworldly a manner, persisted in hitching his wagon to a star.

To the Editor of the *Writer*.

March 30, 1907.

I scarcely have the heart, so soon, to write the paragraph you desire. Nor is it easy to put Aldrich's genius, and a personality such as his, into an epigram. Only himself could have done something like that, for one worthy of his grace and insight.

Two things, however, I have a wish to say. Call to mind that he belonged to a nineteenth-century generation, and to a group whose brotherhood had not the trick (nor cared to have it) of promoting their advancement by aught save the quality of what they unaffectedly wrote and put forth with self-respect. In spite of this, it is strange that in the case of a native poet, and even in this age of literary blazonry—I can give it no apter name—it should require his death to make his countrymen reflect that in art, melody, feeling, his exquisite lyrics were unsurpassed by any poet of his kind at home or abroad, and that they were arranged by him not long before his death and left in perfection as his contribution to American song.

To R. W. Gilder. October 13, 1907.

I yield to the impulse which bids me tell you, before the day passes, how very fine and noble your Requiem for Saint-Gaudens seems to me—and must seem, I think, to the too few who still know what poetry is.

(The critics, the young writers, the public, seem to mistake poetical *materia* for poetry itself—and this more than at previous times within *our* recollection.)

I have read "Under the Stars" again and again, last evening and to-day. It was in my mind the moment I woke this morning.

It appears to *me*—if I were as content with my own statement as some people are, I should say it *is*—one of the finest and most imaginative poems America has produced, and in the front rank with the best in America or Britain of recent years. The *last three stanzas* are most elevated, beginning with the great line,

"Mysterious sky! where orbs constellate reign!"

Of course, none but you could have felt the *emotion*, concerning the theme, which has buoyed this requiem to so imaginative a height of language and construction. You have so much to do with the early *appreciation of Saint-Gaudens*—you have always been so temperamentally in sympathy with his specific art—you have steadily perfected your own artistic method, and you are now, if ever, in the ripeness of your powers.

I shall watch with interest the public and "critical" reception of this really great elegiac. It will afford a fair test both of current poetic comprehension and of willingness to honor one who is of our own selves. If the poem should be undervalued, treated lightly, I shall certainly venture to state my own opinion of it; if otherwise, I shall write of it, of you and your career, in my papers now begun.

After such work in your present vein, I hope you will never again write in the manner fairly and *unrivalledly* preëmpted by Whitman. It was all very well to have something like it for that long Boston poem, but in your shorter and select lyrics should R. W. G. follow the trail of "any one in particular"—to use Chas. Lamb's phrase?

To Brander Matthews. December 15, 1907.

One of the few compensations of the frigid Seventies is that an old voyager still has the right to hail a very eminent grown-up, as affectionately as ever, by his given name.

If I am slow in thanking you for one of your books [1]—one of the most varied and suggestive—I have been alert to read it, and to learn from it. For it gives me the most sincere and independent thought of a modern—yet now ripe and mature—thinker. I don't know a brain with more *energia* than yours, nor one with so varied a range of interest; nor has any other one of the juniors to whom I have been attached by chance, and instinctive association, had so much as you of the unhesitating courage of his calling and belief. This is a quality that tells with us Americans, and measurably with all generous and fearless peoples, and with your acquirements and constancy of purpose it is going to carry you far. I am content to foresee this, and have taken, as I know that you realize, no end of vicarious satisfaction in the successive advances already secured by you.

Your distinctions between Invention and Imagination are acute, and I feel their truth, and like the clearness with which they are drawn. I am glad you point out, too, what after all Science by itself can *not* do for us—that we need the artistic and literary temper as a complement to what, as I predicted thirty years ago, might become too insistent. The essay on "Old Friends with New Faces" is so interesting that I think you might have made it longer and more inclusive; doubtless you could find more illustrations, though at this moment I couldn't tell where.

But I set out to write only a few words. You know I am on the quarter-stretch, and ought to nerve myself with "now or never," yet have only had a few half-days this season for my own work. . . . Letters pour in—and will to the last. For all this, I have a keen pleasure in, and it would sadden me to miss, such remembrances as yours, from those who have been nearest to me of your generation.

At the meeting in memory of Mr. Stedman, Mr. Gilder read what he termed a prose-poem by Miss Anne Partlan.

"What is your best poem?" The writer asked this question of Stedman, some years ago.

"I have not written it," came the quick reply. "Some day when I can get away from business cares and manifold duties, I am going to write my best poem." At that time the poet was en-

[1] "Inquiries and Opinions."

gaged in liquidating the debts of a dying friend, by means of letters to the invalid's numerous creditors.

Some time afterward, he was asked again if he had begun work on the best poem. "Not yet," he responded cheerily, while writing a check payable to an invalid author, who was in the Home for Incurables.

A short time before he left us, the poet turned to the writer and said, "I have not written it and I fear I shall go soon."

Dearly beloved poet, you were writing the Best Poem all your life, in deeds of love and kindness, and to-day it is being sung in the hearts of all whose lives are the better for the strength and cheer of which you gave so freely.

CHAPTER XXIX

SOCIETIES, ASSOCIATIONS, AND CLUBS

THE AMERICAN COPYRIGHT LEAGUE

It was inevitable that, with his endowments and sympathies, Stedman's influence should be worked out through the organizations and institutions of social life. Clear of head and high of heart, generous of his thought and life, it was natural that he should seek and be sought by many societies aiming at the social, intellectual, and literary betterment of the world about him. In reviewing and examining the astonishing mass of material concerning these aspects of his life wonder grows at his manysidedness, and his inexhaustible activity. "Viewing the allotted space at command," it is only at best a passing glance that may be given to each. To epitomize his labors in and through any one of a dozen institutions would require a volume.

Stedman's share in the struggle for International Copyright began in 1868 and ended forty years later with his death. He was Vice-President of the American Copyright League under Mr. Lowell's Presidency, succeeding Lowell as President in 1891. The history of the long struggle may be found in a number of volumes, among which are several issued by our Government; Mr. George Haven Putnam's "The Question of Copyright" (Putnam's Sons, 1891), best gathers the facts to a focus. The conflict of interests aroused in the long controversy developed not only partizanship, but not a little "politics" and feeling. As a leader in the movement Stedman's work was never at an end and according to the evidence often most wearying. He watched bills proposed in Congress, drummed up opposition to tricky legislative projects and amendments, wrote editorials and open letters to the newspapers, took part, even in Authors'

readings, to aid the cause, corresponded with foreign societies and authors and representatives, carried on controversies, fulfilled his official duties as Vice-President and as President, and the rest. That he was in downright earnest is shown by a little incident,—his refusal to shake hands with some high personage because the man had used his power to veto a certain copyright bill.

The following are stenographic suggestions of some things he would have said had not his ill-health prevented attendance at a meeting:

Mr. Stedman referred to the thorough examination made a year ago, by the Committee, of the whole subject,—the testimony of the leading authors, publishers, etc. He would refrain from going over well-worn ground. Complimented Mr. Chace, on his knowledge of and devotion to the subject. For his own part, he wished to lay stress upon the American need of the proposed reform. Our moral duties to foreign authors were plain, and had been the main ground of the pleas long made. No one need restate them, after Mr. Lowell's zealous and brilliant epigrams—already proverbial. But the wrongs suffered by our own authors, the retardation of American literature, from the first had weighed most on the speaker's mind, and always had been urged by him from his earliest connection, in 1868, with the old "International Copyright Association." With the British author the question simply was whether he should occupy this "Greater Britain"—whether he should have *more* market; with the American author, whether he should have *any* market in his own country. He cited Irving's complaint, half a century ago, of the difficulty of obtaining even a consideration of a home-manuscript by a new author—the publishers naturally "thinking it not worth their while to trouble themselves about copyrighted native works, of unassured success, while they could pick and choose among successful British works, *for which they had no copyright to pay*." He cited Prescott, Griswold, Poe, to the same effect, and said this stated the situation in a nut-shell—except so far as it had been modified, as Mr. Holt had explained, by the "trade courtesy" which existed until within the last twenty years. At present, the greatly increased number of authors being considered, the state of things was worse than ever. After giving illustrations of this, Mr. Stedman passed to the emas-

culating and hybridizing effect of this upon the public sentiment. Our cheap and popular reading is not of the kind to foster a truly national and American sentiment: it is more like,—in its diction, opinions, illustrations, even in its treatment of scenes and manners, that of a British province, than of a great republic in the New World. The desire of the American public for something different was under-estimated by its lawmakers. American intelligence, generosity, fair-play, were all underrated. Americans, and nowhere more than in the extreme West and South, want the best books, wish them well-made, and wish their writers—whom they regard with interest and even affection—fairly remunerated.

He then considered the change of programme, which had so amended the Chace Bill that, by various concessions, authors, publishers, and many of the typographical unions, etc., were at last united in its behalf. In conclusion, he did not believe that authors of genius could be made by a just copyright system, or entirely repressed by the want of it. Great authorship can not be *begotten* by statute, but it can be *nurtured* and fairly recompensed. Nothing so impressed him with the inherent freshness and strength of our native literature, as the results it had produced during the last half-century of absolute restriction and statutory discouragement. He did think that it now is at least twenty-five years behind its proper growth, owing to the disadvantage of its position in the national market. He would venture, finally, to make one or two corollaries to Mr. Lowell's famous saying that "there is one thing better than a cheap book, and that is a book honestly come by." 1. A good book, well made, is worth a fair cost to its purchaser. 2. The lowest-priced horses, pictures, and books, are not the cheapest. 3. In the literary market, just now, good home-made bread is quite as wholesome for Americans, as are French rolls or even English muffins.

The following letter to the *Tribune* was sent in 1884:

THE COPYRIGHT BILL

A LETTER FROM MR. STEDMAN ON THE ONE YEAR CLAUSE

To the Editor of the *Tribune:*

Sir: In common with my brother authors I have observed with pleasure the new departure of our publishers in regard to International Copyright, and what you term their "unanimous

sentiment in favor of the Dorsheimer Bill." For, until the full text of that bill appeared in the *Post*, I had supposed that it would provide as now amended, the measure for want of which our native literary progress has been so greatly retarded.

But "Section 8" of the amended Bill, if I rightly understand it, seems to contain the worst feature of the so-called "Harper Treaty" of 1880, and of other plans heretofore favored by many publishers. That section is given as follows:

"Sec. 8. That no citizen of any foreign country shall be entitled to a copyright for any book or dramatic or musical composition which shall have been published, nor for any dramatic composition which shall have been publicly performed, *in any foreign country, one year before application has been made for a copy thereof* pursuant to the provisions of this act."

Now, is not this the same old "time limitation," in a less malignant form? The Messrs. Harper, if I remember aright, were willing to allow the foreign author three months in which to obtain an American publisher; the Philadelphia houses proposed a still shorter term of grace; while Mr. Haven Putnam, whose honored father was a life-long advocate of true International Copyright was willing to accept a six-months' restriction, but thought the foreign author really entitled to a year of grace,—the term, in fact, to which he is restricted by "Section 8." Mr. Holt, although he signed the Harper circular for reasons given in his recent letters, has been a liberal and outspoken promoter of International Copyright, pure and simple, during the whole of his career.

For some reason this peculiar restriction seems to be the one thing dear to the hearts of American publishers; it suits even those who have been friendly to Copyright Reform, and is the "last ditch" which those who have opposed us will surrender. Here we find it, even smuggled into Mr. Dorsheimer's admirable Copyright measure—for which we are all just now so grateful to him, and which, if it passes without this vitiating clause, may cause his name to be remembered as long as that of Rowland Hill.

After the signatures were obtained of a few prominent writers, friendly to certain great houses, it was not difficult to induce elderly and eminent writers to append their names to the Harper circular under the belief that an effort was making in behalf of genuine reform. I declined to sign it for the following reasons, namely:

That the restriction of a term, in which the foreign author was bound to publish in this country, would cut off a large class of the most important writers, and their works, from all advantage under the Treaty; that men like Spencer, Darwin, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Emerson, Whittier,—in short, even the greatest writers and thinkers, whose work was in advance of the time or for some other reasons not immediately "popular," and yet should afterward become so,—would find themselves precluded from any returns for books which they had not been able to bring out in two countries at the outset. All such books, if in time a popular demand for them should arise, would be open to piracy.

It is true, now, that the Dorsheimer Bill requires only the "application for copyright" to be made within a year from publication in a foreign country. But the Courts have settled the principle that an "application," to be legally effective, must be in good faith with intent to speedy publication.

Seeing that this clause nullified a most essential portion of Copyright Reform, I would not sign the Harper circular, greatly as I esteemed the unceasing friendship and generous hospitality of its projectors. I wrote to the *Tribune* protesting against it. Your own opinions were in accord with mine, and your clear and able editorials at the time, with those of the *Post*, and a few other journals, brought the "Harper Treaty," and kindred measures, into disfavor. To the present date, you have carefully watched the progress of Copyright Reform, and now the *Tribune* is ably promoting the Dorsheimer Bill. But have you not overlooked the meaning of Section 8? I shall be glad to find that I am misconstruing its effect; yet I see that Mr. Joseph W. Harper, Jr., reads it by the same light, and says: "The provision by which the foreign author is given a year to negotiate his copyright in this country," etc.

Writing to our Minister in London, Mr. Lowell, on this restriction, in 1880, I was gratified to find that this restriction found no favor in his eyes. The question seems to me of so great importance that, although a member of the Executive Committee of the present Copyright League, I withheld my signature from the recent memorial to Mr. Frelinghuysen, because that memorial expressed a willingness to accept, if need be, a partial reform. When Congress at last shall act upon a question to which thirty years of agitation have for the first time gained it serious attention, any

measure adopted will remain *the law* for another thirty years,—good or bad. Hence I would rather endure the present state of things (which is not so oppressive for American authors as it was before Mr. Munro and his rivals came into action) than favor the passage of a deceptive or faulty Act.

A loyal interest in the Copyright movement, from the time of my early duties as a Secretary and Committeeman of the Association of 1868,—led by such men as W. C. Bryant, G. P. Putnam, S. I. Prime, R. G. White and J. Parton,—possibly has made me familiar with the points essential to a true reform. The Dorsheimer Bill covers so many of them, and is so noble in its general aim, that I long to see it perfected by a change or cancellation of "Section 8." Otherwise I should not trouble you with a letter at this advanced stage of the discussion.

Very truly yours,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

At a meeting held in Washington, March 17, 1888, in aid of the cause, Mr. Stedman said:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—You remember Hogarth's picture of "The Distressed Poet" in his garret, with his shabby gown and night-cap,—the forlorn cat and kittens sleeping on his only coat,—his gentle wife trying to pacify the virago who thrusts a long, long bill in his face. Look over his shoulder, and see the title of the scroll he is writing: "Riches: a Poem." That was the normal state of the author in Merrie England, a century and a half ago. His riches were all of the imagination. Times have somewhat mended for the British writer. Let him earn the reputation of one of our Howellses, or Egglestons, or Warners, and—without going to the magazines, the very life-rafts of our own writers—he is sure, as Trollope confessed, of fair payment on the nail for each book that he writes. All this does not prevent it from being a flagitious wrong that he should be robbed of the further income, from the product of his own hand and brain, which he ought to derive from this English-speaking country, where, after all, is to be found the larger body of his readers. Surely an author, no less than an inventor or a merchant or capitalist, is entitled to receive whatever increment, above a subsistence, fair play and honest effort may bring him. We hold that even a judge, or a clergyman,

or a member of Congress, has a right to save and accumulate. Yet it is difficult to get the opposite idea out of some people's minds!

But it would require less courage for an American author, (who usually lacks the intrepidity with which his foreign confrères range our own hunting-grounds), to endure the old-time garret-life than to present himself and his plea before an audience like this,—warm-hearted, I am sure, yet so critical and distinguished. Pray, then, measure the justice of our cause by our daring.

After all, we are only falling into line with the other workingmen at this time. In fact, the American Brotherhood—and Sisterhood—of Literary Fellows are also "out on strike." Not a strike for higher wages, nor against convict or machine labor,—but against labor whose product is simply "covered in," to use the Treasury term, (probably because it is issued chiefly without covers), by the book-trade,—against the labor of foreign authors which is not paid for at all! We differ with other Knights of Labor in wishing these co-workmen to be just as well paid as ourselves. Our plea has been, and is, largely for justice to them. We want to redeem this great and generous nation from the charge of being a grand "Fence" for the receiving of purloined goods. But this is the right time to acknowledge, confidentially, that we are also speaking "for ourselves, John"; though we follow the transatlantic way of pushing our own interest by manifesting a zealous regard for that of other people. And so, from both motives, we are on this strike. We have not yet resorted to desperate measures. I will not harrow you with a forecast of the pall that would cover the land if our poets should stop singing, our novelists cease story-telling, and our historians cut short their episodes of the war! But, in that emergency, it is plain they would not be without resources. This brilliant audience, and those which have greeted them elsewhere, have proved that we should not have to assess our distant fraternity for weekly stipends. The people—Americans of all classes—are with us, though our own want of harmony in the past has made it less clear than now to our lawmakers. We are assured by leading managers—like Mr. Palmer, to whom we owe so much—that the authors are not without a future as a starring-company—that we can, if need be, "take to the road." Some of those now before you have made successful experiments. To be sure, not every one can be, like Mr. Clemens, his own Harper & Brothers, and his own Edwin Booth. But if half-a-dozen new

travelling companies should start out, what a sensation there would be among our friends and allies, the dramatic artists! Towns may yet be billed with posters of the Howells-Bishop Realistic Combination, the Romantico-Dramatic Hawthorne, Cable and Craddock Troupe, or the Gilder and Bunner Melodists, the Johnston and Page Georgia and Old Dominion Varieties in Black and White, or the Eggleston-Riley Old Homestead Company,—to guess at about one-tenth of the organizations that might hopefully "take to the road."

But to speak more seriously. It is the custom of generals to prohibit looting the enemy's camp, chiefly on account of its demoralizing reaction on their own forces. How much worse to make spoil of our co-workers of the same race and tongue! We do not dread them as competitors on equal terms. We have welcomed them heartily to the magazines and journals which at present furnish us subsistence. But in taking their books without pay, our country is punished by reducing to inaction, and driving into strange pursuits, its native authors; by retarding the natural growth of a home literature; by imbuing successive generations of American readers with foreign sentiment; by relying, among other substitutes for wholesome and original reading, upon French and English reprints whose sole merit is that they are sold for a dime. All this, because a slight tax is paid on American literature, while anyone is free to reprint a selling foreign book. And who benefits by it? No one. For now the American author, the publisher, (the ablest practical pleas for International Copyright have been made by two of our publishers—Henry Holt and George Haven Putnam), the printer, the compositor, each and all come to their representatives here, and say: "Give us an International Copyright Law for our own welfare. Do justice to the foreign author, and we shall fare better than we fare now." Only some antiquary, some relic of the unfittest, jumps up and claims to speak for the people, and misapplies a great author's phrase of "a tax upon knowledge." As if, forsooth, the very richness of a jewel should entitle us to steal it with impunity! And is such a voice that of the fair and liberal American people,—of the public which has a liking for its toiling and inventive workmen, and wishes that they should receive a decent reward for their labor? We avow that it is not. Such a gathering as this is a noteworthy answer to the claim.

It is our hope that one of the memorable records in the annals of this Fiftieth Congress will be that through its wisdom the Chace Copyright Bill became a law of the land. On yonder hill is, to me, the fairest and proudest Capitol the world can boast. This city is the mouth-piece of liberty and justice for all. But these States can never wholly escape the imputation of fostering a provincial, a colonial sentiment, as long as we depend for our mental sustenance upon inferior European chap-books, dear at any price, and continue to discourage the native literature which shows such vigor in spite of all restrictions, and which at this moment is held in honor everywhere, "save in its own country."

How the matter shaped itself in the mind of another is illustrated by this letter:

From Parke Godwin.

April 15, 1891.

Your meeting went off very well, I think,—was interesting, and, as the country clergyman said to James T. Fields, at the close of one of his lectures, "was not so *teedeeous*, as I had expected." Lodge, Johnson, Curtis, and yourself were buoyant enough to carry a much heavier official freightage. I was glad you didn't call upon me, as I should have been obliged to question some of the utterances about "cheapness," which some of you republicans who are trying to bolster up an artificial system of industry, deprecate. Cheapness simply means the putting of the desirable things of life within reach of the many, at the least cost of labor. It may be called the barometer of civilization, which marks the rise of the masses of the people in the attainment of higher and higher satisfactions. If I thought your copyright law, even in its half-way form, would render books dearer, I should oppose it; but it will have no such effect. On the contrary it will gradually, not at once, make books cheaper; for the simple reason that security and justice (not irregularity and the ability to plunder) are the real source of assured and consequently economic production.

. . . "A half loaf is better than no bread," but a whole loaf is better than either.

In reply to Walter Besant's invitation in 1885, to accept

honorary membership in the Incorporated Society of Authors, Stedman wrote:

Being quite in sympathy with the purposes of your Association, as stated in the schedule which accompanied your letter, I accept the honor as extended, and without hesitation. The more so, since any author might be gratified by the privilege of connection with a Society whose muster-roll contains the most eminent names in modern English literature. It chances, moreover, that I was the Secretary, fifteen years ago, of the early American International Copyright Association; and I now am a member of the Executive Committee of the present "Copyright League," formed to promote the passage of an equitable Act of Congress awarding the privilege of copyright to foreign authors. In the effort to secure this, we still find our greatest impediments resulting from the attitude of various publishing-houses, at home and abroad.

The following letter, failing, in its purpose, is self-explanatory:

November 6, 1889.

To George Walton Green, Esq.,

Secretary, etc., etc.

If I should be retained upon the Council of the American Copyright League for 1889–90, and should be complimented with a renomination for the office of Vice-President, will you be so kind as to state that I could not accept a reëlection to that distinguished position?

During the last few years, exacting professional duties have caused me to neglect private affairs, which have drifted into such a state that they now require close attention; and I have no longer the time nor the health requisite for any office of public labor and honor.

I have served the cause of International Copyright less ably than I wished, but with all the means at my command, during several trying periods of its history,—and now feel, with grateful recognition of the confidence bestowed on me, that I may ask for relief from active service. More than all, the honor attaching to the office named is now due to one of those leading members of the League who have led, within the last two years, the Washington campaign with tireless energy and great executive skill.

On April 13, 1891, a meeting of the League in celebration of the passage of the long-desired bill was held in New York. Stedman presided, and spoke as follows:

Though our summons was sent out at short notice, we have a thoroughly representative assemblage, gathered to celebrate, upon the eighth anniversary of the formation of the American Copyright League, the passage of a bill securing International Copyright. We celebrate the victorious result of a struggle, the successive campaigns of which have extended over more than half a century. I do not think of any measure which has so long been fought in any legislative body, unless it be the Parliamentary bill to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Fifty-four years have passed since the petition presented by Henry Clay, in 1837, and the favorable report upon it of a select committee, including Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster and Mr. Buchanan.

Now, it chances that within the last week our inventors have been celebrating the 100th anniversary of the American patent system. From the first, a foreigner could obtain a patent. The international principle was at once established. The right at one time was, I think, withdrawn, but in 1836, or about the time a copyright struggle began, it was confirmed upon certain conditions. The international right of property in material inventions—in the designs of what were termed "useful articles," and in "new processes in art or manufactures," was recognized by Congress just 100 years before the principle—for which we have been contending, and the victory of which we are now celebrating—was recognized, to wit: that the right of property in literary invention —in the written product of the brain—however it may be otherwise conditioned, has no boundary lines.

You know, gentlemen, that this was fought for, during many years, chiefly on grounds relative to the welfare of American authors and the development of a home literature. For one, I always have felt that the wrongs experienced by foreign writers, however prejudicial to our reputation among nations, and outrageous as they were, have been less severe than the cruel ills so long inflicted upon our own men of letters—of less moment than the repression of American ideas, the restricted growth of our national literature; during that weary period in which, though a foreign author was denied some increased measure of profits, the

question for an American author was whether he could even obtain a hearing—whether he could live at all. This was the question for him, from the time of Irving's first struggle, and even so late as the formation of the Copyright Association of 1868, under the auspices of Bryant and the elder Putnam.

In time, as we know, the chief wrongs felt by American authors seemed to right themselves. But International Copyright had not been gained. The cause of forty years, chiefly maintained on practical and egoistic grounds, made little headway. I know of no more striking example of the ultimate force of ethics than the record of our final campaigns. It has again been found that right makes might—that it is the most effective promoter of even statutory law.

This result makes us wish still more fervently that Mr. Lowell were with us to-night, and makes us say: "His health was never better worth than now." From the beginning of his active connection with the League, he has put his strength upon the moral side of its argument; indeed, his apothegms, equally famous and enduring in prose and verse, have made the argument for us. You and I, and every Congressman in time, learned them by heart. They became our apostolic and confessional creeds, the first being: "There is one thing better than a cheap book, and that is a book honestly come by," and the second is like unto it:

> "In vain we call our notions fudge
> And bend our conscience to our dealing;
> The Ten Commandments will not budge,
> And stealing will continue stealing."

I shall not here repeat the story of the last seven years. There are others here from whom we shall gather some sense of the zest and suspense and vigor and triumph of the final campaign. The main fact to-night is that here are representatives of all classes engaged in it—of authors, publishers, printers, workmen, and of the noble army of legislators that fought for and with us—gathered to celebrate, first, the legal recognition of the international right of property in literature, and, secondly, the rehabilitation of our national good name throughout the reading world.

Yes, and one thing more. Primarily this is an author's jubilee. But I trust that it is not only American authors who feel like chanting:

"It must be now dat de Kingdom am a-comin',
An' de year ob jubilo."

We hope that foreign authors—and especially our English fellows of the craft—are rejoicing, are rejoicing just a little, are somewhat in touch with us to-night. We really have done our best for them, through weary and costly marches, often led by those who themselves can profit little by what is gained. We can say with George Eliot, "One must be poor to know the luxury of giving." And we now can safely permit our transatlantic brethren to understand that American authors have for some years realized that the time at last had come when we were fighting their battle, rather than our own, as far as material interests are concerned.

The road to publication for an American work has been easy—almost too easy for some trashy American works—since the manufacture of unauthorized reprints became unprofitable. So far as respects the Authors' Copyright League, its efforts have been, to use a hackneyed word, altruistic, except for the satisfaction derived from a sense of honor, dignity, right. For what have we now dared to do? We have doubled at a stroke the list of our competitive writers. All British authors are now American authors. The old toast about the commonwealth of those who inherit the language of Shakespeare and Bacon and Milton at last means something. All will now compete on nearly equal terms in the marvellously broadening market of this "Greater Britain"—of what must be the greatest book-mart of the world.

We have bought this right of competition for our foreign compeers with no small price, and we therefore tender it the more joyously. If it be not a perfect gift, it is the best within our means—as perfect as we can make it. And if we have not yet listened to a symphonic chord of the appreciation which we are assured our new associates must feel, we piously believe that this is due to the gloom of their present season, and because their Anglo-Saxon heart is too full for words, and is one not worn upon the sleeve. For it cannot be denied that our new Copyright law, if not perfect, wins at least nine-tenths of the battle. If it were quite perfect, perchance we might not feel so sure that this revolution is one of those which never go backward.

The one thing more, then, upon which we congratulate ourselves is that American literature has of truth outleaped restrictions and

has grown to that estate in which it fears no just and equal competition. We welcome the wide world's writers to this dependency —assured that their entry, though it may check the production of a class of works that spring up in too fallow a soil, will only act as a stimulant to the zest and noble ambition of the deserving. The prizes will be the more worth, now that the Romans also are admitted to the Olympic games.

The publishers have ably seconded our efforts and are with us to-night. Their position, too, has been misunderstood. They have made more than one concession. The law is no more perfect for them, nor are its results much more clearly defined, than for us, and for their foreign competitors. But they, too, in spite of the eighteenth-century traditions to the contrary, chose to be on the side of right. Moreover, whatever may ensue, they know that nothing can be so adverse as the want of a settled basis of trade. Nor let the typographers be forgotten. The workingman may be an idealist, but his bread is sweet—nor can he live without it. He, after all, has held the key of the situation, and he has not refused to turn it for us.

But now, gentlemen, you are eager to see and hear the heroes of the past struggle—and first the legislators who have carried through one of those great national causes from which too many a public servant stands aloof, because there is—in the phrase of the lobby—"so little in it." I shall not draw too heavily upon their strength, for not all of them are yet recovered from the fatigue of the campaign. Besides, there are so many here to-night from whom we expect—though, for what seemed to me good reasons, I have not set them an example—those brief and rapidly succeeding utterances which render the feasts of our Arcadia so distinctive.

THE KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL

A few days before Mr. Stedman's death, in 1908, he wrote these words for the Minneapolis *Programme:*

Keats, at twenty, prayed "for two years" in which to overwhelm himself in poesy. He was granted a scant five, and what transcendent use he made of them! Had he lived, I doubt not that his sensuous and matchless voice would have taken on, in time, more of the spirituality for which we go to Shelley—whose most con-

summate production was inspired by the poesy and death of Keats.

In a letter to Mrs. Anna Bowman Dodd, written in 1892, Stedman says: "I returned last week, after a month of *absolute* abstraction—of golden seas and skies—trade winds—tropical *far niente:* though I did do *something*, for my voice at last came back to me, and I wrote the most *poetical* poem I have written for many years. 'Tis on Shelley, and will be in the August *Atlantic*."

And to William Sharp: "I remembered that this year is his 'Centennial,' my old voice came back, and I wrote 'Ariel' simply to please myself. The stanza is, as you see, a Keats-Shelleian sort which I finally hit upon. The thing, although few nowadays care for a sustained piece of song, is poetry or nothing: at all events, I can do no better."

Others beside the poet himself have found this to be true.

> Be then the poet's poet still! for none
> Of them whose minstrelsy the stars have blessed
> Has from expression's wonderland so won
> The unexpressed,—
> So wrought the charm of its elusive note
> On us, who yearn in vain
> To mock the pæan and the plain
> Of tides that rise and fall with sweet mysterious rote.

His old friend Mr. Alden, after Stedman's death, wrote:

In this same chapter from which I have quoted, on "The Future of American Poetry," Stedman says: "Our keynote assuredly should be that of freshness and joy; the sadness of declining races only, has the beauty of natural pathos. There is no cause for morbidly introspective verse—no need, I hope, for dilettanteism—in this brave country of ours for centuries to come." This is distinctively Stedman's keynote in his own poetry, which has the Hellenic directness and is as pellucid as Helicon. We do not see that any limitation is thus imposed upon it; but if there is any such limitation, it has its compensatory excellence in the poet's lithe and buoyant spirit. Stedman inherits rather from Shelley than

from Tennyson or from Landor, whom he so much admired. That Shelley was his earliest inspiration is intimated in his "Ariel," written for the centenary of that poet's birth, and, I think, the finest tribute ever paid to his genius.

"What joy it was to haunt some antique shade
Lone as thine echo, and to wreak my youth
Upon thy song,—to feel the throbs which made
Thy bliss, thy ruth,—
And thrill I knew not why, and dare to feel
Myself an heir unknown
To lands the poet treads alone
Ere to his soul the gods their presence quite reveal."

What more natural than that our best example of the union of poet and business-man should be chosen to lead in the realization of a memorial to both Keats and Shelley?

On August 17, 1892, Mr. Stedman wrote to Mr. J. Stanley Little, of Horsham, England:

I have delayed replying to your letter of the 20th ult., because I have been awaiting Mr. Gilder's consent to serve as my colleague here, with respect to your Shelley memorial. Mr. Gilder now writes me: "As to the Shelley matter, I am only too proud to serve with you in that connection." Mr. Aldrich, to whom I also wrote, is in Europe. My letter has been forwarded to him, and he *may* write directly to *you*.

Meantime, I am a very much overworked man just now, but I do not wish to be a mere figure-head in this matter, and so am disposed to make a public call—with Mr. Gilder—for American contributions. If we do so, it will be very impractical to request people from distant points, in what you call "The States," to procure drafts on London made payable to your order, for small sums. So we shall assume the liberty of asking that contributions be sent directly to *us*, and then we can procure exchange "in a lump" for remittance to you.

As it happens, I have the pleasure of enclosing to you a draft for £5/, as a result of the (also enclosed) circular which appeared in the New York *Tribune*. My friend, Mr. S. P. Avery, sent it to me from a Summer resort where he is staying. I have acknowledged it, but should be pleased to have you also send him a receipt

at once—as it is the first American tribute that I know of. Of course Mr. Gilder and I will subscribe in due time. Send the receipt for Mr. Avery *to my care*. Shall write you again ere long.

The work of gathering these funds, etc., led to Mr. Stedman's connection with the establishment of the Keats-Shelley Memorial in Rome, when that movement was organized in 1903. With characteristic energy and unselfishness he devoted himself to the labor of organization, coöperating with his equally devoted ally, Mr. Johnson, watching, planning, arousing enthusiasm, until the realization and end came! A glimpse into his mind is shown in a letter accepting the Chairmanship of the American Committee:

March 21, 1903.

To Harry Nelson Gay, Esq., Sec'y., etc.,
Piazza Poli. 37, Rome.

Your letter of the 1st, postmarked March 4, has reached me, and I scarcely need say that I have read your careful statement with deep interest:—the more so, as I had full charge of a Shelley memorial subscription in the United States, and had something to do with tributes of the kind to Keats and to Severn.

But for some years, as doubtless our poet-colleague, Mr. Johnson, has told you, it has been hard for me (owing to a prolonged "breakdown") to fulfill the public duties of official positions to which I am committed. It is a serious thing to arrive at what I might call the "figure-head age"—when one wishes to do his best work before departure, and is hindered by his own vogue from doing anything which *he* deems essential. (N. B. Take warning, and don't imitate my unhappy career!)

But, as Mr. Johnson has conceived—or at least, with his fine enthusiasm, is promoting this quite inspiring and ideal project of securing the home in which Keats died, and of making it a shrine and a Keats-Shelley reliquary,—I cannot refuse the honor and responsibility offered me by the meeting over which Sir Rennell Rodd presided. It is gratifying to be associated with men like Sir Rennell, Sir Alfred Austin, yourself, and Mr. Johnson, in this international and wholly congenial endeavor. But in truth I would not enter upon it, were it not that I know Mr. Johnson perfectly understands the conditions, and that in recent matters re-

quiring our joint labor he has so ably and unselfishly "stayed my hands" and borne up the weight of them. He has a fine perception of the maxim "ad juniores labores," as far as *I* am concerned, and I always try to have the "honores" fall to his share as well.

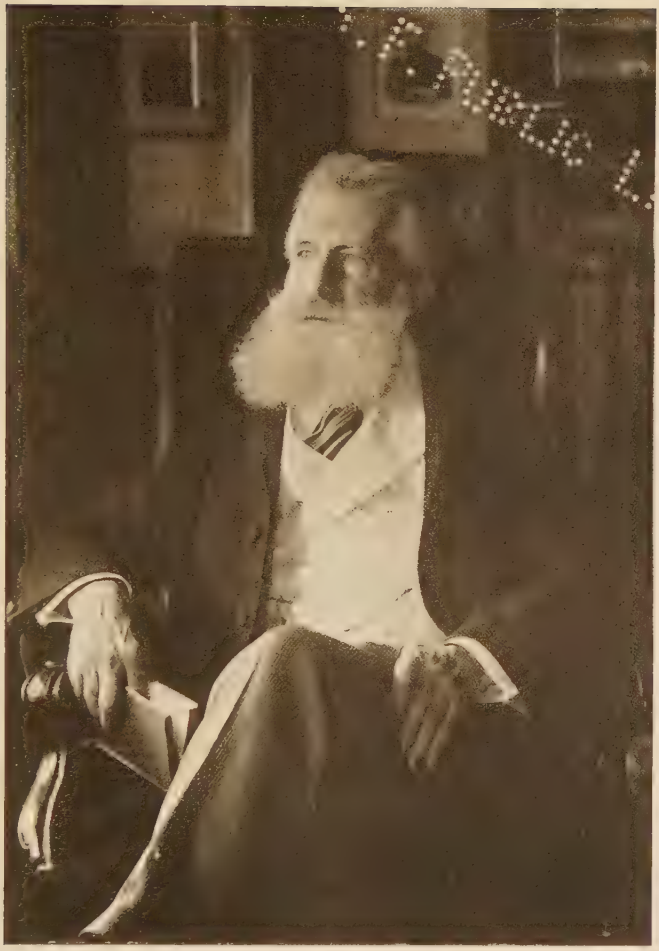
I observe your reference to the need of secrecy until the title to the property can be secured. Be so kind as to give my warm remembrance to Mr. Johnson, and believe me, with regards. . . .

I feel mortified in view of my seeming neglect of certain remembrances from Sir Rennell Rodd, for whose talent I have from the first had a real appreciation. My recent desperate illness has put me a year behindhand in correspondence and acknowledgments. Perhaps you will tell him this, if you are by way of meeting him?

At the Keats-Shelley Entertainment held at the Waldorf-Astoria, February 14, 1907, Mr. Stedman, acting as Chairman, thus introduced the proceedings:

It is not of record in the statistics of the early 19th Century that any of the books of Mr. John Keats or Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley were among the "six best sellers"—that the advance orders were so large that their dates for publication had to be postponed. Yet I see that last month a copy of Keats's first book, with a small bit of his manuscript, sold in this City for $500. and a copy of his third and last book for $405. In London the other day $2800. was paid for his will, a letter, and a lock of his hair. In Mr. Buxton Forman's latest edition of Keats, there is a list of eighty-four issues of his works and of books concerning him, and this is stated to be an incomplete bibliography. It is thought, nevertheless, that he could not have had more than fifty readers when, in his last illness, and in the bitterness of his heart, he directed that "Here lies one whose name was writ in water" should be placed upon his headstone.

As for his elder brother in song, who died so swiftly after, Mr. Browning once told me, on Leigh Hunt's authority, that Shelley had not gained more than thirty interested readers when his glorious minstrelsy was hushed so ruthlessly, off Viareggio, by the "swift wind and unrelenting sea." But within a year copies of two of his juvenile books changed hands at a valuation of $2650.,



STEDMAN IN 1903

From a photograph by his son F. S. Stedman

and only last month an American in London paid $15,000. for three little note-books of the author of "Adonais."

I hope that what I am saying will not be thought to savor of what a distinguished New York publisher, himself an author, entitles "the commercialization of literature." These prices were not paid for those relics simply as curios, nor wholly for their scarcity, but because the fame and writing of those delicate and mortal youths have proved to be as deathless as the English tongue which was their servitor. It was because the younger of these poets, dying a boy of twenty-five, had restored the native beauty of English song and added to it a lasting and transforming magic of his own; and because the older of them, who lived but long enough to chant the other's dirge, and died before his thirtieth year was rounded, had a rapturous melody in his lyric verse, unheard before for centuries, and devoted his boundless aspirations to the enfranchisement of human life and thought. It is because that now, in the ninth decade from their pathetic deaths, they are not only beloved above most other bards by poets of whatever quality, but are read as never before by the world at large, and that every object associated with either of them is consecrate to tender reverence and preservation.

Just here I see that several eminently successful American authors to my right and left have serious faces; but the fact that they are in so great demand while yet with us, and can wear the purple and fine linen which in the past have chiefly appertained to their publishers, need not quite debar them from the expectation of standing well with posterity! Let them remember that in Keats's and Shelley's own brief term there were other authors—for example, Walter Scott, and Lord Byron—who certainly *were* among the "six best sellers." And I have no doubt that nothing but the untimely taking off of the young poets, to whom this afternoon is devoted, could have prevented them from coming into their own before middle age. In 1829, only seven years after Shelley's death, we find the students of Cambridge University taking up arms for Shelley, and sending a delegation to Oxford (which stood up for Byron) to prove in debate that Shelley was the greater poet of the two. At about the same time, Keats was powerfully affecting Tennyson, the future poet laureate, and Shelley was soon to enthrall Browning. They were no weaklings. They very soon would have made their way to the front. As it

was, their copyrights were worth possessing before the expiration of the thirty years after death which is the longest term the American Congress purposes to allot to American authorship, and at this moment,—half a century later still—would equal the revenue from those of modern authors most in demand.

There is something unique about this afternoon's assembly. New York is said to be devoted to luxury and money-making; yet here, in its central Banquet Hall, the very focus of the New World's pleasure ground, you have come together moved by common affection for the memory of those whom the gods loved too well in that they died so young, and by common interest in a sentiment which has touched the heart of free Italy, and forever guards their graves; the heart of the ancient Motherland that gave them birth, and in whose tongue the splendid legacies of their imagination endures; and the heart of our own generous Nation, whose children first conceived the gracious purpose which has now been fulfilled—the design of securing and preserving the Roman house, in which Keats died, as a perpetual shrine.

Concerning the inception of this design, I will detain you but a few minutes to say that four years ago on Keats's birthday, the 23rd of this month, on the initiative of one of their number, seven American writers then in Rome set on foot the project to buy, and preserve for all time, the house at the foot of the beautiful Spanish stairs, which is hallowed to lovers of poetry by the fact that there lived for four months, and there died, at the outset of his twenty-sixth year, the immortal boy John Keats. These seven Americans invited to preside over their first meeting the English poet, Sir Rennell Rodd, who, as Secretary of the British Embassy, had defended the grave of Keats against removal and against the effort to cut a road through the cemetery where it lies. Many of you have visited that exquisite and haunting spot. There are the graves of Keats, and of his artist friend, Severn, side by side; that of Shelley is not far away. Of special interest to Americans are the near-by graves of our poet and sculptor, William W. Story, and of that gifted and noble American woman, Constance Fenimore Woolson, whose writings with those of James, Howells, and a few others of her generation, lifted our imaginative literature throughout a most adverse environment to a proud station of its own. A kinswoman of mine has sent me flowers from her grave, which she says is purple with the violets that flood everything.

"They flow up like waves over each new wreckage." "Most touching of all," she writes, "is the grave of Keats with its piteous epitaph, but very beautiful—almost joyous in the royal Italian sunshine over the ripe old wall. All along the foot of the Aventine Hill, the almond and cherry trees are in bloom; and still the West wind 'sends sweet buds like flocks to feed in air.' Let me copy for you the acrostic in the tablet in the heavy arch stone gateway."

> "Keats, if thy cherished name be 'writ in water'
> Each drop has fallen from some mourner's cheek;
> A sacred tribute, such as heroes seek—
> Though oft in vain—for dazzling deeds of strength.
> Sleep on! Not honored less for epitaph so meek!"

To this I will add that the season of grief has long passed away. Where is the ardent young poet still in his twenties who would not accept the fate of either Keats or Shelley, so that he might be equal to them in their present renown? Visiting the Protestant cemetery at Rome one now may well recall those lines from "Samson Agonistes":

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us."

Even before this movement began, an American lady, now actively connected with its success, and on the Committee for this Benefit, had occupied for three years the historic Keats apartment where, with her mother, she received hundreds of visitors desirous of seeing the house, and where she had formed the idea of herself buying it—a plan supplanted only by the new project of a popular subscription.

A desire arose that a Memorial be established in the house to take the form of a library, and a collection of relics of Keats and Shelley, and that funds should be secured for their maintenance, and for the maintenance as a perpetual resort for all pilgrims—under conditions free from the sordidness prevalent at too many shrines—of the house itself as sacred to the memory of Keats, and for the perpetual safe-guarding of the cemetery, containing the graves of these English poets.

The movement immediately took on the aspect of ardent coöperation between the two branches of the English race. A joint Committee was formed in Rome, under the efficient Secretaryship of Mr. H. Nelson Gay, who has been devoted to the cause from first to last. The chairmen have been the successive Secretaries of the British Embassy, which has supported the project from the start—often in difficult circumstances. At the head of the distinguished London Committee has been the Earl of Crewe, the Secretaries being first Mr. George Leveson Gower, and now Mr. Harold Boulton. Here I wish to say—although I shall be brought to book for it by the gentleman to whom I refer—that the life and soul of the whole movement during these four years has been an American—one of the original seven—who, by his personal exertions, his two journeys to Rome, his appeals in season and out of season, has promoted the collection of the large American share of the common Fund. Without his persistent labor, it would never have been raised; the Keats house never would have been secured. I have been cognizant, as Chairman of the American Committee, of his unflagging work. He is the Secretary of the Committee, and his name, Robert Underwood Johnson, will be forever associated with what he has thus achieved.

On the 30th of last December, the funds collected in Rome, England and America were sufficient to justify us in taking title to the house, subject to a moderate mortgage which this Benefit will greatly help to extinguish. Next month there will be a benefit Concert in London at Stafford House, the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, under the best social and professional auspices, toward the same end. In the spirit of Anglo-Saxon unity and sympathy, we welcome here an official representative of Great Britain, and the Ambassador of the King of Italy—that enlightened and progressive sovereign, who in the most cordial words has given approval to the enterprise to which already our President and His Majesty, King Edward, had given theirs.

Mr. John Gilmer Speed, great-nephew of Keats and editor of the poet's works, whom we have the pleasure of seeing here to-day, has already presented to the library portraits of Tom and Fanny Keats, exhibiting in his ever careful regard for the memory of his distinguished relative, the pride of the whole family of George Keats of Louisville—many of whom are included among the contributors of the special fund of over $1,000. which has been

raised in Kentucky, under the leadership of Mrs. Evelyn Snead Barnett.

In closing, I would like to say that, while there have been one or two liberal contributors to the Fund from their bounteous means, there has been something more touching and expressive in the mass of the subscriptions than has characterized any list with which I have ever been familiar. They have come from every class of writers, and from every class of lovers of the beautiful and heroic, and often in sums large in proportion to the means of the givers, plainly showing a wonderfully unanimous affection for the memory of Shelley and Keats.

The Committee thank and welcome all here who give their service to-day on the platform, or by their presence in the house. And now, after this explanatory introduction, you are more than ready to listen to the entertainment of the afternoon.

Representing the American Committee of the Keats-Shelley Association, before the Memorial Meeting, held at the Carnegie Lyceum in memory of Edmund Clarence Stedman, January 13, 1909, Mr. Johnson said:

. . . In making a choice of a chairman for the informal American Committee, but one name was considered—that of Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose devotion to the interests of his art and his profession had long been proverbial. He accepted with alacrity, and from that moment to the day of his death the project was constantly in his thoughts and very dear to his heart. Mr. Stedman never took lightly the obligations he assumed in committee work, and there was often need of his suggestiveness and his practical judgment, for the negotiations for the property were long and complicated, and unsuspected obstacles of various kinds arose. But he lived to see the Roman house pass into the hands of the permanent Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, and to know that it would soon be open to the public, as it now is; that its library had already rich treasures in its archives, and that before many months it is to be the beneficiary of a distinguished English collector. He considered it an honor and a privilege to have a share in erecting this new altar to Poetry, and from the start it was as an honor and a privilege that the invitation to coöperate was extended to others.

It is a matter of interest to know that all the rooms in the apartment in which Keats died have been or are to be furnished with funds contributed by Americans, the fourth and largest room having been left to the last to become the occasion of a most grateful tribute to the poet, critic, and man in whose name we are met to-day. After the death of Mr. Stedman the Roman Committee expressed the earnest desire that the house might contain some memorial of him, and the outcome of this suggestion is that I have just received from Messrs. R. H. Thomas, F. K. Sturgis and G. W. Ely of the New York Stock Exchange the sum of $2,000., recently contributed by one hundred members of the Exchange for the purpose of furnishing this room in memory of their former associate. So generously to continue the unfinished work of a man is almost to prolong his life. I can think of no more appropriate tribute nor of one which, as a mark of friendship, would have been more grateful to Mr. Stedman himself. He who in body never got to Rome—never nearer than Venice—is thus at last to be forever associated in that Roman house with the two great poets whom he understood and loved and whom in prose and verse he so worthily praised.

I shall now ask you indulgence while I read a few lines of verse which I wrote in his memory on the Keats anniversary—the 23d of February of last year—on the day when it was hoped that Mr. Stedman would be in Rome to participate in the formal dedication of the house.

TO ONE WHO NEVER GOT TO ROME

You who were once bereft of Rome
With but the Apennines between,
And went no more beyond the foam,
But loved your Italy at home
As others loved her seen:

You knew each old imperial shaft
With sculpture laureled to the blue;
Where martyr bled and tyrant laughed;
Where Horace his Falernian quaffed,
And where the vintage grew.

The Forum's half-unopened book
You would have pondered well and long;

And loved St. Peter's misty look,
With vesper chantings in some nook
  Of far-receding song.

Oft had you caught the silver gleams
  Of Roman fountains. To your art
They add no music. Trevi teems
With no more free or bounteous streams
  Than did your generous heart.

I hoped that this Muse-hallowed day
  Might find your yearning dream come true:
That you might see the moonlight play
On ilex and on palace gray
  As 't were alone for you;—

That your white age might disappear
  Within the whiteness of the night,
While the late strollers, lending ear
To your young joy, would halt and cheer
  At such a happy wight;—

That you,—whose toil was never done,—
  Physicianed by the Land of Rest,
Might, like a beggar in the sun,
Watch idly the green lizard run
  From out his stony nest;—

That you, from that high parapet
  That crowns the graceful Spanish Stairs,
(Whose cadence, as to music set,
Moving like measured minuet,
  Would charm your new-world cares),

Might see the shrine you helped to save,
  And yonder blest of cypresses,
That proud above your poets wave.
Warder of all our song, you gave
  What loyalty to these!

The path to Adonais' bed,
  That pilgrims ever smoother wear,

Who could than you more fitly tread?—
Or with more right from Ariel dead
The dark acanthus bear?

Alas! your footstep could not keep
Your fond hope's rendezvous, brave soul!
Yet, if our last thoughts ere we sleep
Be couriers across the deep
To greet us at the goal,

Who knows but now, aloof from ills,
The heavenly vision that you see—
The towers on the sapphire hills,
The song, the golden light—fulfils
Your dream of Italy!

THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY

Although Stedman was elected a life member of the New England Society in 1877, he did not attend a dinner until 1895 when he found himself a Director. In 1897 he became its Second Vice-President. "Philistia is doing the handsome thing by Bohemia," was appended to his diary entry. But, in that year, chiefly because of ill health, he resigned as "it is my rule to accept and hold no position however attractive without doing my full share of the work involved." His resignation was not accepted, and he was advanced to the First Vice-Presidency in 1899.

Prior to his Presidency he had for several years prepared the toasts, secured speakers, etc.; in 1900, for instance, he wrote William Winter:

The main purpose of this letter is an official one. For my sins, I have been advanced to the first Vice-Presidency of the big New England Society—my first cousin, W. E. Dodge, being President. By tradition, I shall succeed him in 1902, if I live and don't go to gaol meanwhile. This year I am, ex-officio, Chairman of the "Annual Festival"—i. e., the Dinner-Committee. Now, you know that the "New England Dinner," on Forefathers' Day, December 22d, is the blue-ribbon dinner of the year, and has made

and unmade "reputations" and possibly Governors and Presidents. This year President Dodge and I have resolved to simplify it, and to give it a more literary and poetic tone, and we both ardently desire to secure William Winter as one of the five speakers. We have a brand-new Toast this year, in honor of the new holiday week established in New England—*The Old Home Week*—in which the far-off sons of the six States return for a kind of Summer homing trip. This July and August vacation has caught on, I believe, with all the States, but with some variation as to the respective dates. Rather an effective and poetic notion?

It has struck me that this Toast might take your fancy, and set your eloquence a-going, and that you might even rise to a few stanzas of verse at the close of your prose discourse. But, prose or verse, or both, we want yer, ma honey, and *want you badly*. For we cannot find that you—a Yankee of the Yankees, a boy of Rufus Choate's—and our very best postcoenal poet-orator—have recently, if ever, paid tribute to and been honored by the Association of your own clansmen.

Upon his election to the Presidency of the Society for the years 1902–3, the postscript of a letter to his friend Aldrich reads: "At last, you know, I am that Philistine of the Philistines, the President of the New England Society. Shall I have the face, or indeed the gift, to write a poem again? There is one saving clause, in my plea, to wit—that I am still as poor as when we met in that Fourteenth Street phalanstery and I was writing 'Bohemia.'"

To a member of the nominating Committee, April 15, 1902, he says: "You certainly plunged me into an arduous Winter campaign when you changed me from a kind of poet into the President of the New England Society. Think of having to attend twenty-four annual dinners of 'our Sister Societies' with a chance of being called upon to speak—and to-night a certainty, at the Huguenot Dinner."

The spirit in which he entered upon his duties as President is shown by an excerpt from a letter to Dr. Furness: "For the first time in its history the New England Society has a *literary* President and he is naturally desirous that his dinner should smack of the best his *realm* affords. In the words of

one of your own kind,—Will you 'furnish wine for the occasion'?"

At the Memorial Meeting in 1909 Mr. Seth Low said:

I have been asked to speak of him for the moment particularly in relation to the New England Society. He was a New Englander, proud of his ancestry, and joined the Society in 1877. In 1902 and 1903 he was the Society's President, and as such he presided at the annual banquets of those years. If anyone really wants to know what manner of man he was it would not be easy to find out better than by reading now those two addresses. There you will find his delightful humor, his happy phrase, his merry anecdote, and shining out of, over and underneath all, like the sheen on satin, the literary quality that was native to the man.

He poured out of his treasury things new and old, and he handled the things new and old, not as one handles objects that you see in a museum, but as one sees things of everyday life in one's own home. There you will find also a note of good fellowship, a note of good citizenship. There you will find a note of idealism and equally of patriotism and pride in the New England stock from which he came. This is what he said of it at one occasion:

"We are told that in the section from which it is derived the Colonial stock is now in the minority; but in those dear old States that masterful strain will hold its own. Just as surely as the Saxon words in the English language, though outnumbered tenfold by accretions from all tongues, give to the peerless English speech its strength and tenderness, so surely will the convictions of self-denial, of morals, and the independent mind of that ancestry ever dominate the life and nature of New England, and the New England spirit will survive wherever its exiles are found."

What was said by Edmund Clarence Stedman to the New England Society of New York a year or so ago, he still says to the New England Society and to all the people of New York, and so shall he continue to say while the Saxon words of our peerless English speech give it its strength and sweetness.

From the introductory speech of the President at the Society's Dinner of December 22, 1902:

But this is not the hour for counting losses. To-night we salute

the living. Nor have we any occasion to close up ranks that have been abundantly recruited. Our membership is larger than ever before and our treasury is strong. Moreover, by that characteristic longevity of the New Englanders of the New England Society in New York—perhaps they live longer for being transplanted—the life term of those whose ages have been recorded, and who have died within the last year, reaches the surprising average of over seventy-one years. Yes, our members are good and the gods love them, but they do not die young. Perhaps this is somewhat due to the fact that we do not long for the other world as much as they did three hundred years ago. The old idea that we must not value this one has yielded perceptibly to the notion animating Thoreau's cheery rejoinder to the friend who asked him how the opposite shore looked to him. "One world at a time," he answered, even with failing breath. I see a great many before me, as always on these nights, who have arrived at that age when they have learned, with our uptown humorist, that a hair in the head is worth two in the brush. I suppose there may be some here who have risen to the rank of what the dialect writers call "octogeraniums," but if so I will wager there is not one here to-night who would care to have missed this fine assembly. I am sure they are rather of the mind of that squire of whom my faithful Irish serving man told me last Summer. It seems that years ago in Ireland, in Ballynagore, near Cork, there was a man of high degree, one of the founders of a name borne by at least two of New York's conspicuous citizens. He built a lofty Croker mansion very much to his mind; everything about it was fine and regal, even to the fish pond on the top of the house where he might angle at pleasure. I appeal to Judge O'Gorman if there is any man but an Irishman who would think of angling on the roof of his house. However, it was very fine, but an end came all too soon, and when his time was near, he broke out with the cry: "Sweet Ballynagore, and must I leave you?" "Be reconciled, my dear husband," said his wife, who stood weeping by his bed, "you are going to a better place." "I doubt it very much," was the dying chief's response. Now, that must be our sentiment to-night. We can find no better place than this, whether we look at the floor, at one another, or at the galleries above us. . . .

Who for the first time or for the hundredth time reads the annals of the Pilgrim Fathers for himself—reads the story of the depar-

tures from England and from Holland, the voyage of the *Mayflower*, the landing at Plymouth Rock—without having a sense of the pathos of it all, and of exultation and wonder at its results! That story has now become one of the undying world stories, like that of the founding of Rome, the salvation of Greece at Marathon, the discovery of America by Columbus and his band. It is exceeded in sacrifice, in motive, in results, only by the records which testify to the precepts and the life of the Light of the World. And if any accuse us of something akin to Shintoism in our reverence for those whom the *Mayflower* brought to Plymouth or the *Arabella* to Boston, we can safely say that they are folk who after all have no ancestors to speak of.

And again at the Dinner of 1903 these passages illustrate:

We ourselves come together, usually in promising condition, just before Christmas—at the recurrence of the season, doubly sacred for New Englanders, when our pioneers found themselves prisoners of hope, with months of raging ocean between them and Europe, and with they knew not what in the measureless and mystic wilderness between them and the setting sun. Hackneyed as the world's verdict upon their godly and heroic adventure may seem in the utterance, it is a fact that as often as one's close attention is given to it, the larger it seems to be writ across the scroll of human history. We may have been bred to repeat automatically our praise of the forefathers, while we fall immeasurably beneath their example; we may have glorified them and ourselves until it behooves us to imitate those university fellows at dinner, one of whom said to Bishop Creighton: "Sir, I think you ought to know that in Oxford we are all so well acquainted with one another's good qualities that we only talk about those points which are capable of amendment." But, after all, it would be poor taste for us, in our affluence and comfort, or for this land in its greatness, to admit—even from apostolic descendants of our ancestors' hospitable Dutch allies—any censure of the consecrate remnant who saw the ship, which had borne them to the wilderness of an unknown shore, depart without a single return passenger; who stayed to endure the cold and pestilence and famine which in the first year cost the lives of half their number; who thus dared and endured for liberty of conscience, the freedom of man, the glory

of their Maker. A festival in their remembrance cannot recur again too surely or too joyously.

It is the same dinner, at which the best cheer and thought and speech of America are never wanting, and in which our townsmen for years have taken pride. It is the same society, with all its tranquil changes. Our treasury is gradually enlarging—at the annual meeting the vested and cash assets reached a new high record. Our charities have been fully maintained, and not a few households have been made brighter. Our membership is well maintained, fluctuating above and below the number of fifteen hundred, and scrutiny is exercised with regard to candidacies for election. I believe our membership fairly represents, as it stands, an element second to none for intelligence and character, and a power that makes for good.

Stedman contributed the following prefatory note to a collection of the New England Society Orations:

There is a "natural piety" in sentiment that moved a New Englander of the New Englanders, the senior editor of this collection, to preserve the Society addresses of his own day, and to seek with a scholar's instinct, and with loyalty to the region that bred him, for those printed in the earlier years of our time-honored league. The New England Society in the City of New York can point to no better estate transmitted to it from the past century, than this of which the administration has devolved upon Mr. Cephas Brainerd and his daughter. . . .

The collection is in truth one that our members need not hesitate to set forth. The record and influence of the Society's annual celebrations are of no slight import; again and again these festivals have been among the memorable events of historic years. At present, when cyclopædias of oratory compete for favor, it is easy to overestimate the relative value of speeches on current themes,—

> "To give to dust that is a little gilt
> More land than gilt o'erdusted."

Through the dust of the past the true metal of the New England addresses warrants their preservation in authentic and dignified form. The granite conviction of the early utterances now recalled was the basis upon which grew, from decade to decade, a hospitable

structure, touched with beauty, warm with patriotism, inscribed with ancestral tradition but steadfastly open to increase of light.

Taken together, "The New England Orations" of the years embraced in this their first collection, form of themselves a class of forensic literature, which no book-lover, especially if he be a member of the Society that it honors and illustrates, may not without satisfaction place upon his shelves.

THE HALL OF FAME

In 1900 Stedman was asked by the Chancellor of the New York University to serve as one of the hundred Official Electors in making selections from the candidates nominated for admission to The Hall of Fame in 1905. He added to the list to be voted upon the names of three women, Maria Gowen Brooks, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Lucy Blackwell Stone. He urged the election of Hamilton, and suggested an improved system of choosing "Immortals," which was substantially adopted. In 1909 Chancellor MacCracken directs attention to the fact that out of the forty names approved by the one hundred electors, thirty-one were named by Mr. Stedman, and in nine only were different names preferred, although over one hundred others were supported with more or less zeal.

Stedman's chief service as an elector was an education of the electors and of the public to the strange neglect of James Fenimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe, especially in a convincing article published in the *North American Review* of August 16, 1907.

The brightness and clarity of this bit of polemic writing, in full view to him, and now also to us,—it was a few months before his death—is pathetically shown in one of his light touch-and-go postcripts to a letter: "I enjoyed greatly having fun with my brother Hall of Fame electors and think you will like the Punch-bowl paragraph. As the archbishop asked Gil Blas, 'I trust you find no signs of senility in my sermons?' "

The paragraph referred to is as follows:

I have used the word "associates" in speaking of the hundred judges, but—and here I reach the gravamen of the complaint—we have been, after all, associated no more actively than the gargoyles of Notre Dame or the saintlier marble images of the Milan Cathedral; perhaps still less so, for it has not seemed beyond conjecture, in the fancy of our pasquinaders, that the statued sages of a Supreme Court House, or Mr. Ward's allegorical impersonations within the Stock Exchange pediment, may confabulate at the mystic midnight hour. I am myself the possessor of a generous bowl which I piously believe—like Gil Blas unquestioning his children's paternity—to be of the true Imari ware, and which mayhap was often brimmed with votive blossoms before its departure from the Far East. For me and mine it serves the office of a punch-bowl, though too fragile to be lent in the fashion of Holmes's silver transmittendum from the "Mayflower," nor setting up any claim to have come hither in the "Powhatan" with the first Japanese embassy. Yet 'tis not without the dignity of years, and is treasured all the more for its spacious fragility. Now, grouped in a council ring within its inner surface—τὶ θεῶν δαίδαλμα, "some cunning work of the gods"—are the sages of Nippon, they whom we traditionally denominate the Hundred Wise Men. More than once I have essayed to count these dignitaries, but the refulgence of their shorn and shining heads is confusing, and one can only make sure that their tally falls somewhat short; certain of them must have tarried behind, like those laggard judges who withheld their ballots in the University election of 1905. It is true that after a liberal enjoyment of the service which my bowl renders upon occasions, the count is enlarged, or even doubled. Between two extremes it is pleasant to regard the Wise Men as present in full quota—a legendary Hundred; and as to their wisdom, do not their reverend faces, their attire—judicial, sacerdotal or scholastic—reveal this beyond a doubt?

How often, since the inception of our Hall of Fame, I have reflected enviously upon the superior advantages for counsel enjoyed by our prototypes within the hollow of this bowl—this coracle so vastly fuller of wisdom, and more enduring, than that which sank beneath the weight of only three wise men of Gotham.

Work and worry naturally came through many requests that he should aid others in advancing the claims of their

favorites, and, as was meet and good, in aiding the movement of Southern friends as regards Poe and the Baltimore Memorial.

Two of his letters illustrate his interest:

To Judge Malone.

October 14, 1907.

Your statement of views as to the Hall of Fame, its takes and mistakes, is of high interest and a valuable side-light on the whole matter. Let me refer to your expressions seriatim, though unfortunately in the briefest manner to-day.

Perhaps you do not understand that the Hall of Fame for Women was an after-thought, some years subsequent to the endowment of the original foundation. It is a kind of Annex, possibly put up by Miss Helen Gould, and not necessarily in competition with the male and main Valhalla.

For my own part, since it seemed that something must be conceded to the sex and its modern status, I looked around for Hypatias, Aspasias, Portias, etc., and sent in nominations of Charlotte Cushman and Maria Brooks (the author of "Zophiël"—whom Southey thought to be so great). I really think Marie Mitchell was rather famous as an astronomer; and as for Mary Lyon, she established the first of our long procession of Universities and Colleges for women. Whether the *finis coronat opus* applies to her service is a question which I agree with you is still open to debate.

You may have observed passages in my article showing that I recognize time precedence, i. e. seniority, as a factor of some weight in selection for the Hall of Fame. Lanier was of a far later generation than Poe. In fact, later than my own, and twenty years later than the literary groups succeeding Poe. There is no real grievance yet, then, in his case, and we may take it for granted that his time will come. Of course Andrew Jackson, Calhoun, Monroe, and Maury all should be in the Hall, and if you Southern Gentlemen would take a hint from what you observe of the feminine propaganda, and press the nomination of those famous men, you would do exactly what you are requested to do under the constitution of the Hall of Fame.

We put Lee in handsomely. Not all the Southern judges voted for Poe. On the strength of what you say, with so much catholicity, concerning Mrs. Stowe, I am almost ready to vote for Stone-

wall Jackson; although your General Alexander seems to detract somewhat from his laurels. Thank you for speaking so plainly and for your affectionate personal expressions. I have but just time before going out to sign myself appreciatively yours.

To Joseph M. Hill.

November 12, 1907.

This letter would have been written a month ago, according to my purpose, but for an illness and for the fact that the article to which it relates brought me into so much correspondence that until now I have been unable to do more than reply to those who wrote me personally.

I will, however, ask you graciously to permit me even at this date to refer to the careful letter which you wrote to the New York *Times* as one of the Hall of Fame Electors.

My article would have been worth while if it had done no more than to bring out the views of such a man as yourself, and to give the Electors a better acquaintance with one another. I say this despite the advantage of "spontaneity of selection by the different representatives," which indubitably is, as you say, to be desired from every point of view. My plea was not intended to militate against this, but to obtain a working method by which *something* may be accomplished. The fact is that now, having elected for commemoration the names of those Americans of first historical rank which necessarily gained the vote of almost every judge, there is not so much doubt as to which others are entitled to commemoration as there is concerning the question of precedence. For example, you might feel that Jackson should be commemorated sooner than Cooper; while another judge might wish to invert their order. In such case, if a preliminary ballot should show that one or the other of those two names had come very near to a majority, a few changes of vote would insure the election of that one.

But I write chiefly to correct a misapprehension on your part. For myself, although a professional writer, I seize a scientific book or a historical treatise much more eagerly at my time of life than a new romance or volume of poetry, and I have taken quite as much interest in the choice of statesmen, jurists, scientists, and soldiers for the Hall of Fame as in the balloting for men of letters. Perhaps you may know that while a writer by choice, I have had

to lead a practical and laborious business life, and to take part in national movements other than literary. It would have been supererogatory for me to have expressed disappointment over the failure to elect Andrew Jackson to the Hall of Fame. My dear old chief in the attorney-general's office, Edward Bates, of Missouri, gave me a good maxim in my youth when he said "Never take up more skin than you want to pinch." As I was one of the literary Electors, it was my duty and purpose to present the claims of Bryant, Poe and Cooper. But in my personal balloting, covering a broad field, I have done my best to pursue a catholic and objective standard. In replying to a letter from Judge Malone of Tennessee, in which he spoke of my late friend, Sidney Lanier, and others, I wrote a passage which I beg leave to quote. . . .

I see that I am writing at too great length, but I wish to add that when editing with Miss Hutchinson our "Library of American Literature," in many large volumes, I myself took charge, for the most part, of the Southern end of it, and read all the leading Southern orators, statesmen and writers with the utmost care that justice should be done; paying, for example, quite as much attention in space and matter selected to Calhoun, and the doctrine of States' rights, as to Hamilton and Federalism, or to Webster and the inviolability of the Union.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

A good many persons, [says the *Dial* of December 6, 1909,] both in England and America, have toyed at times with the notion of founding an Academy which should reproduce the familiar French model in one or the other branch of the English-speaking world. It has been an interesting speculation, and, when coupled with the attempt to make a suitable selection of names deserving of academic distinction, has proved almost as fascinating as the attempt to make a list of the hundred (or some other number) best books. Either subject is one upon which almost everybody feels qualified to express a judgment, and readily lends itself to popular discussion. Ten years ago, what we call "the Academy game" was started first in this country, under the direction of a now long defunct literary journal, and an American Academy was constituted by grace of popular vote. The results of this *plébiscite* method were about as irrational as might have been expected. Mr. James Whitcomb Riley and Mr. Richard Harding Davis

were elected to membership (much to their own astonishment, we may presume), while Colonel Higginson and Charles Eliot Norton were left in the outer darkness. "Mark Twain" received more votes than Mr. Henry James, and Frank Stockton more than Edmund Clarence Stedman. Moreover, as we pointed out at the time, the American list was entirely made up of men of letters in the narrower sense, whereas its French prototype included only nine representatives of *belles-lettres* in the total of forty names.

This newspaper Academy was, of course, only a matter for jest; but it so happened that steps were being taken at the same time toward the organization of an academic body that should be really representative of American leadership, and not alone in the narrow field of literary achievement. The first step was taken in 1898, when the American Social Science Association nominated a small group of leaders to form the nucleus of a National Institute of Arts and Letters. The men thus nominated proceeded cautiously to enlarge their membership, eventually raising it to the number of two hundred and fifty, set as a limit. The next step was taken when the Institute, thus brought into existence, set about the organization of an Academy. The academicians were to be members of the Institute, and were to be fifty in number. The method of selection was carefully considered, and was as follows: Seven members were chosen by vote of the Institute; these seven elected eight others; the resulting fifteen elected five more, and the twenty thus brought together added ten others to their number. By similar procedure, the membership was still further raised until the limit was closely approached. There the matter rests; and thus the American Academy has come into existence, "not with observation," but none the less the embodiment of a highly significant fact.

The best justification for the method employed, and the all-sufficient excuse for the being of the Academy, is found in the roll of its membership. The following list gives all the names up to the present date, including those of deceased members.

E. A. Abbey
C. F. Adams
Henry Adams
*T. B. Aldrich
John Bigelow
E. H. Blashfield
W. C. Brownell
John Burroughs

* Deceased.

G. W. Cable
G. W. Chadwick
W. M. Chase
S. L. Clemens
Kenyon Cox
* F. M. Crawford
D. C. French
H. H. Furness
* R. W. Gilder
B. L. Gildersleeve
* D. C. Gilman
A. T. Hadley
* E. E. Hale
* J. C. Harris
Thomas Hastings
* John Hay
T. W. Higginson
Winslow Homer
* Bronson Howard
Julia Ward Howe
W. D. Howells
Henry James
* Joseph Jefferson
R. U. Johnson
John La Farge
* Henry C. Lea
Henry Cabot Lodge
T. R. Lounsbury
H. W. Mabie
* Edward MacDowell
* C. F. McKim
A. T. Mahan
Brander Matthews
* D. G. Mitchell
W. V. Moody
John Muir
* C. E. Norton
T. N. Page
H. W. Parker
J. F. Rhodes
Theodore Roosevelt
* Augustus Saint-Gaudens
J. S. Sargent
* Carl Schurz
W. M. Sloane
F. Hopkinson Smith
* E. C. Stedman
A. H. Thayer
Henry Van Dyke
Elihu Vedder
J. Q. A. Ward
A. D. White
Woodrow Wilson
G. E. Woodberry

Here are sixty-two names altogether, forty-five of them the names of living men, and the collective distinction of the list is deeply impressive. One may miss a well-known name here and there, and one may have doubts concerning the academic quality of a few of the names included; but the membership of the Academy as a whole is clearly representative of what is best in our intellectual and artistic life. A third of the names, more or less, belong to *belles-lettres* proper; the remaining two-thirds represent approximately the other fields of distinction recognized by the French Academy, and the fine arts other than literature, which the French Academy hardly recognizes at all.

* Deceased.

This account of the organization is timely because, although the Academy has had an unobtrusive existence for some five years, it is to be more definitely and officially launched within the next few days. Following the precedent of the American Academy of Sciences, incorporated in 1863, it is about to obtain a charter by Act of Congress which will emphasize its national character. The annual meeting required by its constitution will be held December 13–14, at Washington; a reception by President Taft will be a feature of the occasion, and the papers read will be published as the first annual volume of proceedings.

It would be futile to attempt to indicate the probable course of the activities likely to be undertaken by the new Academy. One naturally inclines to quote from Matthew Arnold's classical essay on "The Literary Influence of Academies," and we have no doubt of the desirability of our possessing "an institution owing its existence to a national bent toward the things of the mind, towards culture, towards clearness, correctness, and propriety in thinking and speaking, and . . . which creates . . . a force of educated opinion," an institution which will tend to maintain a "high, correct standard in intellectual matters," which will discourage every "orthographical antic," every form of "ignorance and charlatanism," every manifestation of "the provincial spirit." Whether our own Academy will make for these ends, and for the promotion of that "urbanity" which we as a people so sadly need, remains to be disclosed. It is at least a cause for satisfaction that such a start has been made, seemingly in the right direction.

On February 16, 1904, Mr. Stedman was elected to the Presidency of the Institute which office he held until 1907, and, on December 5, 1904, by vote of the Institute at large, he was placed among the first seven members of the Academy of Arts and Letters, then in process of organization. In his letter of notification the Secretary, Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson, said:

Let me thank you cordially for your appreciation of my interest and participation in the organization of the Academy of Arts and Letters. You and I have been of one mind in our conviction that the time has come to found in this country a body representing

the highest standards and the highest achievements of our time in literature and the arts. If reasons for it did not exist in the general needs of coöperation among these professions, they would be found in the deteriorating effects of commercialism upon intellectual and æsthetic work. It will only be poetic justice if eventually commercialism should be called upon to make atonement by furnishing the means necessary to endow the great work which the Institute, through the Academy, can do. In procuring our subvention we must proceed with all the delicacy, tact and self-respect at our command. But I have every confidence that we shall succeed, for we have by our first election shown that we *deserve* to succeed.

In the selection of the first seven members we have done what we could to honor literature and the arts by choosing as the fathers of the Academy our most distinguished and representative men, against whom, known as they are even beyond the limits of the language and the arts, there can be no cavil. Painting has its Nestor in La Farge. Sculpture its Donatello in St. Gaudens. Music its Mendelssohn in MacDowell, while Fiction, History, Criticism, Humor and Poetry are at least doubly represented by our four famous men of letters. To such hands, freely chosen without partisanship, may the Ark of our Covenant safely be committed. Naturally the height of achievement cannot be kept so lofty in the members hereafter to be chosen, but there is no fear that the standard of personal or professional honor will be lowered.

And so success to the Academy of Arts and Letters—and may all the Muses be propitious!

Mr. Stedman did not fail to be present at every meeting of the Academy, or of its Executive Committee, and how he threw himself into this new field of work is illustrated by the following extracts from letters:

To W. D. Howells.

January 19, 1905.

It is high time that I should make some report (in addition to what you will have had from Johnson) of the conference of the "Seventh of January"—as the French might say—and in acknowledgment of your letter dated December 29th.

You did your best, and that letter, containing your ballot, must have reached *New York* on the Evening of January 7th, of course too late for the luncheon and voting. It got into my letter-box at the Century Club on Monday. As you courteously left your ballot unsealed—and as the five colleagues at the conference had decided that their own ballots and their own wishes should, at this first meeting, be mutually "open," I read your ballot, and was pleased to see that five of your names were on my *own* list: Norton, James, Aldrich, Sloane, Lounsbury. I did not vote for Ward, simply because I preferred to let La Farge, St. Gaudens, MacDowell, declare their choices in their respective arts. But we all agreed (save MacDowell) on Ward, as soon as St. Gaudens nominated him. Aldrich's *status* as a member of the Institute was undetermined, owing to a most absurd letter he wrote *to* the Institute (I told him it was absurd . . .) about Boston being unrepresented sufficiently. But that is a long story, and our dear T. B. A.—whose unique sense of humor departs when he gets a fad in his brain—and you and I will laugh over it, if we three live to meet again. As we all wished to elect Aldrich, and as we wished to choose at least one of your men if your ticket should greatly vary from ours, we only *elected* seven, leaving one vacancy. But we agreed to elect Aldrich, if his name should be on your ballot, and if he should be considered by himself and the Institute *Council* a member of the Institute. Upon urging by E. C. S. and others, he has retained his membership and the Council ratifies it.

Result: *five* of your candidates are elected Academicians—Norton, James, Aldrich, Lounsbury, Ward. The three others chosen are—Henry Adams, McKim (excellent?) Roosevelt (I accepted him, if the others would give me Lounsbury). Well, I suppose the President may be considered the Richelieu, or Grand Monarque, of the Academy: at least, he represents statesmanship in our conglomerate. Hay was there, in fine fettle; glorious and tender soul, I love and honor him. He was for Adams, first, last, and all the time, and La Farge of the same mind; for Adams, not alone for what H. A. has published, but for what he has in store behind the arras. I think Adams little *known*, save by his "History," but perhaps it is a good thing to have one Academician, of the first fifteen, conspicuous for *esoteric* greatness—somewhat as was Fitzgerald prior to the seizure of Omar Khayyam by the *vulgus ignoble*.

I want Sloane, Gilder, (poet, philanthropist, editor, and mover in all sweetness and light), and others—notably some of the elders, whose "chairs" would soon be vacant, like Bigelow. It is not a question of likes, but of right. Higgingson and Hale are not members of the Institute. I wish we could get them in, in time. H. H. Furness—an Academician *par excellence*—has consented, at my request, to join the Institute. I hope we can get him in, (again, in time), but there have been some mistakes, naturally,—such as sending out a call for nominations—*many* of which have come in, and all which must be submitted at once, i. e. in a bunch, to the vote by the Institute at large.

The utmost good feeling, and a desire to choose only *nomina clara* for these eight, characterized the meeting. I accepted the post of "Presiding Member" for the occasion, as *somebody* had to act, but shall nominate La Farge for the next conference, as there must be no sign of a line of succession. In fact, I never would have put on your mantle at the Institute if I could have foreseen this Academic *work* involved.

To Horace Howard Furness.

January 10, 1905.

It has been a concern upon my mind, especially since I succeeded Howells in the Presidency of the *National Institute of Arts and Letters*, that your name is not upon its muster-roll. I have understood perfectly the need of, and your desire for, avoidance of entangling alliances; also, that the inclusive character of the said muster-roll did not at first indicate a future eclecticism. But the fact was that the "Institute" was created, and its members chosen rather ignorantly, by the Social Science Association, and then lopped off—or, rather its umbilical cord was nipped—and told to go to work for itself. This was seven years ago. When I finally attended one of its quarterly sessions, I was surprised to find that the gathering was confined almost to the leading men in letters, scholarship, and the arts; that La Farge, Saint-Gaudens, Sloane, Lounsbury, Rhodes, Howells, and men of like caste, were meeting with much zeal in the belief that with the opening of the XXth Century something of real moment would grow out of it all.

At the last meeting it appeared that there were vacancies, caused by the resolve of the members to "die themselves down"—

i. e. by a rule (made with that intent) that only one new member should be elected for every *two* who should die.

The nominations were rigidly eclectic, inasmuch as (and this is the point of my letter), after a year of debate, the Institute at large had voted that a National *Academy* shall be formed by selection *from the* membership of the Institute. That Academy is now in process of very deliberate organization, as you will see by the confidential matter enclosed. Fourteen members have thus far been elected, and *they* have the power to choose their associates. All the Arts are represented. The first seven were elected by the Institute at large. They met at the Century Club, on my summons, January 7th, as my guests—John Hay making a date at which he could come from Washington, and being deeply interested throughout. Without disclosing the list, I wish to assure you that it consists of men the peers of any other group in the English-speaking world. The regret was sincere that the Institute does not have the honor of your name upon its list. But at the meeting of the larger body, in December, so many gentlemen competed for the pleasure of putting you in nomination that I, as presiding officer, could scarcely tell who was first.

Doubtless you already have been notified of this and asked not to decline the nomination. Whatever reply you may have made, the nomination holds until the next meeting. I write to say that a membership of the Institute involves no work or trouble on your part—and no appreciative expense—and that my interest in trusting that you will accept is concerned entirely with the organization, now so promising, of the Academy. This organization is of a very different nature from the premature experiments of the last fifty years. If an endowment should ultimately be secured, the movement will prove one of "historic" importance—forgive the hackneyed phrase.

THE WHITTIER HOME ASSOCIATION

The depth of Stedman's nature, his seriousness, his love of New England character—we remember his "Lord's-Day Gale"—were often half-hidden or half-revealed by the lambent sunshine of his laughter or the intellectual radiance of his appreciative criticism. This was demonstrated throughout his whole life by his reverence for and devo-

tion to Whittier. He himself once alluded feelingly to the fact that during the same days in which he was laboring with his fellowmen to bring them to a due recognition of the value of the so different Poe, he was, heart and soul, devoting to Whittier an energy rescued with difficulty from age, illness, and manifold duties. In 1900 he wrote a 25,000 word article on Whittier in the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica"; and, earlier, "Ad Vatem," "Ad Vigilem," and his essay in "Poets of America." The tears came to his eyes when Whittier dedicated to "Poet and Friend of Poets," his "At Sundown."

So profoundly was Stedman moved when his name was made the first in the long list of great names and good of the Advisory Board of the Whittier Statue Fund, that he successfully took up the work of help and advice as to plans and models, for securing the Home, in writing to the newspapers, (notably to the *Independent* of May 22, 1902,) and in obtaining subscriptions. He sent $716.00 personally secured. The letters of thanks to donors were far from formal, each being written with individual feeling. For instance:

To Frank S. Bond.

March 15, 1902.

My dear Mr. Bond:

I married at so infantile an age that I have a fellow-feeling for bachelors—in fact, I have sometimes been accused [1] of hunting unduly for my lost bachelorhood. Perhaps you incorporated the years I *didn't* have into your own somewhat extended term! You plainly *have* shared with me my weakness for a sentiment, and my inability to say "No" to a friend's pleading for a cause relating to our affections and longtime traditions. I heartily appreciate your prompt and generous response to my appeal for the Whittier Statue Fund, and the words that "made the thing more worth." I see that old Norwich is writ large in the *Tribune*, with the spire of the Second Congregational Church still dominating the town.

Sincerely yours,

Edmund C. Stedman.

[1] By my family, of course! [E. C. S.]

Writing, in 1894, to the Biographer of Whittier, Stedman said:

Whittier was so essentially the typical "Friend," the typical American reformer, the typical poet of home, philanthrophy, and freedom, that I can think of no one but yourself who *could* (so many of his time and breed having died before him) have edited his Life and Letters even half so well as you. It needed one familiar not only with New England, and with the whole morale and progress of the Abolition cause, but also with the poet's own clan—with his personality and inner life—to be his biographer. Your office has been indeed a privilege, but also a most heroic task. You have, I assure you, every reason to feel content with the manner in which you have sifted and mastered the great amount of material involved, covering so many years and so notable a career. I am impressed, as I see your reviewers are, by the equable and impressive directness of your narrative, and the sense of reserved steadfastness and adequateness which your quiet style conveys.

I began to read, admire, and honor Whittier when, as a youth, I boarded with the Thayer family at Northampton. He will ever seem to me our *most* American poet thus far. Two things in your record are very interesting: the way he was frequently "brought to book" for incorrect details of *fact* in his ballads (as if his poetry were not more "essentially true" than any "facts"); secondly, the real service done by Mr. Fields as both his publisher and (technical) critic. Fields was the only editor I ever knew, who, while not a leading author himself, *always* improved the *poetry* of any writer to whom he made his wise suggestions before publication. I learned to value his hints. There is a poem of mine, called "The Doorstep," which met with some favor, though a very simple and artless thing. As first written, it had two stanzas which never have appeared in print. Mr. Fields wrote me: "Cut off the opening and closing stanzas, and it will be a little gem, and shall go into the *Atlantic*." I had the moral strength to do so, and always have been glad of it. He was perfectly right, yet those were my pet stanzas.—By the way, I am very glad "The Doorstep" appeared before Mr. Whittier wrote "In School Days," for the two lyrics are pitched so nearly in the same key, as to theme and feeling, and their measures are so akin, that I never would have

dared even to write *my* poorer one—"let alone" the printing of it —after reading his sweet and lovely stanzas!

But see how I am trying your patience. I must confess that more than a score of other books than yours are on my table, unacknowledged, besides enough unanswered letters from far and near to make me fully realize how their like wore upon Whittier's strength and spirits. So you see that I am writing at such length to you for my own pleasure, and because I am so grateful to you for the manner in which you have fulfilled your most important trust.

Thrice had Whittier asked Stedman to become his literary executor.

To Mrs. Emily B. Smith. (Secretary of the Citizens' Committee of the Whittier Centennial.)

December 12, 1907.

As you have assured me, you know my disappointment at finding it impossible to fulfil a purpose to take part, otherwise than by this letter, in your Celebration next Tuesday.

My regret is the more trying, as this is the first time when I have failed to profit in full by an opportunity, during Mr. Whittier's life or afterward, to join in any tribute to that one of our minstrel Pleiad for whom I had the most personal affection and reverence. In youth, under the stress of his fervent lyrics I escaped from my political training just in time to share in the culminating struggle against slavery. After his inspiring polemic strains ended in victory, all recognized a new and more artistic quality in his lyrics; and when he gave us "Snow Bound" I felt—even as now—that in every element of the pure idyl it equals the best in any Christian tongue. For in truth to the landscape, sentiment, common life of his own New England, of his own people and their time, it stands unrivalled.

During a term of years Mr. Whittier, in his favorite haunts and my own, as well as through our correspondence, was the elder poet whom I was most privileged and best content to know. I joined in the deep attachment for him manifested by Bayard Taylor—himself a Friend, and poet-son after the Quaker-bard's own heart. It was to Whittier, a quarter-century ago, that I dedicated books which I thought least unworthy, in England

and America, with verse entitled "Ad Vatem," in which the prophetic attributes of his life and presence were invoked. The closing lines were an endeavor to express the feeling of many disciples:

. . . . . .

In everyone's life there is perhaps one thing which is a lasting compensation for much that has gone wrong. My own treasure of that sort has been the "laying on of hands," for thus it seemed to me, by Mr. Whittier in his dedication of "Sundown."

It was a concern upon various minds that the great Encyclopædia Britannica had neglected to include Whittier upon the roll of New World poets in its authoritative volume. This was the stranger oversight, because John Bright so often publicly expressed his own choice of the Quaker balladist as the primate of our national minstrelsy. But the chance came a few years ago, with the issue of the new edition of the Encyclopædia, to set things right. When President Hadley, as sponsor for the American contributions, requested me to prepare an inclusive sketch of Whittier's life and works, I deemed it a high privilege to do so, and to append a critical tribute to his character and genius,—a single passage from which may be apposite to your record of the present occasion:

"It is necessary above all to consider the relation of a people's years of growth and ferment to the song which represents them; for in the strains of Whittier more than in those of any other nineteenth-century lyrist, the saying of Fletcher of Saltoun as to the ballads and laws of a nation finds an illustration. He was the national bard of justice, humanity, and reform, whose voice went up as a trumpet until the victory was won. . . . To the last it was uncertain whether a poem by Whittier would 'turn out a song,' or 'perhaps turn out a sermon;' if the latter, it had deep sincerity, and was as close to his soul as the other.

"The fact remains that no other poet has sounded more native notes, or covered more of the American legendary, and that Whittier's name, among the patriotic, clean and true, was one with which to conjure."

This present letter—if it did not come from the heart,—would be too personal for the Centenary of the poet who best expressed New England, and whose song and memory are a national heritage. I have rendered more studied tributes to him, and was of the multitude which gathered at Amesbury in the peace and beauty of

his burial day. Permit me to close with the hope that this Centennial Winter may round up the fund which the Whittier Home Association has striven so earnestly to complete for the erection of a fitting memorial to our poet in the town where he set his hearthstone, and sang, and worshipped, and where pilgrims for centuries will come and go.

At the funeral of Whittier held at Amesbury, Massachusetts, September 10, 1892, Stedman was the last speaker:

Why does the death of our friend, the poet of the loyal North, seem a personal loss to all his readers? Because he read the hearts of the people of his own time, and, in reading them, revealed his own. If that be the feeling of readers who never knew the man, what can be the feeling of his friends? To know John Greenleaf Whittier was a consecration; to have his paternal counsel and fellowship was like the laying on of hands. That consecration, that benediction, came to me in such wise, that when I read that I should soon see him no more, I could think of no other words than those of Elisha—"My father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" For, indeed, his passing is not death, but a translation. In the apt, melodious phrase of the simple race he loved and helped to free, it seems as though the sweet chariot had swung low and taken him. He has gone, and they say he has not left his mantle behind him. Why should he? He was the poet of a time and people now past. Patriot and philanthropist, he succeeded himself as the poet of household tenderness and religion, and the legendary and beauty of a later time, dividing their waters with his mantle as he had before divided Jordan, through which the dark race passed to freedom.

Whittier's art has been criticised. What is the highest art that appeals to the people? A balladist, a poet of idyls and heroic passion, Whittier's art was instinctive, its artlessness was its strength. Where his verse seems faulty, any attempt to increase its "finish" means the loss of force and charm.

Whittier has left us our finest personal lyrics, our deepest poems of religious feeling, our sweetest songs of household affection, our best ballads. His sustained poem, "Snow Bound," is at once the most artistic, truthful and picturesque idyl of New England life yet written. He is a bold critic who underestimates even Whittier's

art. No one can overestimate the power, fervor and influence of his poems during our National crisis.

The last time I felt moved to speak at the burial of a Friend was beside the bier of a double friend, Bayard Taylor, the younger brother, almost the son of Whittier. Like Whittier he believed profoundly in the immortality of the soul, and in the inward light. Why should not the poet believe in that which is but another name for inspiration? Taylor went years ago—and now the death of Whittier leaves us but one of the great New England Pleiad. He closes the era. He, too, has joined the "vanishers" of his poem:

"Doubt who may, O friend of mine,
Thou and I have seen them too;
On before with beck and sign,
Still they glide and we pursue."

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION

Stedman joined the Century Club in 1864, and, as poet, on committees, as trustee, in the Second Vice-Presidency, continued a notable and popular member up to the end of his life. In 1900 one of the Nominating Committee asked him to allow his name to be proposed as President. "It is eminently an office that is not to be sought, yet one not in the heart of a Centurion to make any affectation of avoiding," was the reply.

Bryant, since 1868, the President of the Club, died in 1878, and at the Memorial Meeting Stedman read his poem, beginning,

How was it then with Nature when the Soul
Of her own poet heard the voice which came
From out the void, "Thou art no longer lent
To Earth!"

On November 19, 1880, at the Century's Memorial Meeting of Sanford R. Gifford, the Poet's Wreath of Song was given to the Painter's Memory. The Record of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Club, held January 13, 1897, contains the official Song, *Centuria*, the poem by Stedman, the music by Joseph Mosenthal. In the same volume

also is given the "*Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos?*" with its perfect conjunction of seriousness and wit.

And, O, to catch but a glimpse of the company thronged around—
The scholars that know it all at last, the poets finally crowned!
There the blithe divines, that fear no more the midnight chimes, sit each
With his halo tilted a trifle, and his harp at easy reach.

Of another memorable piece of work Stedman incidentally wrote to a friend: "Certainly, if asked what I think to be my least faulty bit of quiet writing, I should say it is my contribution to the Memorial volume which some of us Centurions united to make, in love and honor of Clarence King. King's own spirit seemed near to everyone who was privileged to join in that tribute to him."

The poem on Byron was first read at the Club, and was published in the *Independent* in January, 1888.

Professor James Herbert Morse has with loving generosity contributed the following memories of evenings at the Century Club:

In 1875, my friend George Haven Putnam came to live under the same roof with us, and with him came Mr. Bayard Taylor, both being members of the Century Association. Through their kind offices I became a member of that Club of authors and artists. Authors and artists they were all supposed to be, although some would have been hard put to it to find in the old trunk in the garret the schoolboy poem or the rude picture of the girl in the nearest High-school desk, by which they obtained the title. But whatever the "open sesame" whereby one entered the charmed circle in East Fifteenth Street, once in, he sat with the scribes and Pharisees, on equal terms. There accordingly I always found Mr. Stedman, and his place, without "if, and, or but," was deservedly with the best. There were various coteries, forming quickly, and perhaps dissolving quickly, in which his light, sharply-defined features, his bushy dark hair, already admitting on too familiar terms the flocks of gray, were sufficient evidence that poetry, art, the drama, travel,—one or all—were up for discussion. Sometimes the center of the group would be Edwin Booth—in later days generally

PORTRAIT-SKETCH OF STEDMAN

By Homer Martin and George B. Butler, Century Club, 1887

with Barrett.—Then poets and artists played around the drama. If it was Sanford Gifford, recognized head of the chaste landscape school, then art got its innings, and one must name all the lofty heads in that first and greatest period of American landscape art to indicate properly the kaleidoscopic variety of the drift to that center.

Then or later—but most of all then—I have seen the center reflect the best of England—Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer, Joseph Chamberlain, Edmund Gosse, etc.; but a picture that most delights me is one of the earliest I saw. I noted it down at the time in a little book which I find reflects but little of the charm and joy of those wonderful evenings, and almost nothing of the conversation, except some bits that I naturally wished to remember. The Club still held to its old quarters in the semi-Bohemian district, which men of that day wofully persist in thinking was the only Bohemian center in the world, and one never to be surrendered. William C. Bryant was the president of the Association—a venerable figure in the Metropolitan life, but not to be so long. A year only, and he would be gone. On the evening I am speaking of he had come out, I think because Bayard Taylor was just home from some of his marvelous travels. It was not usual to see our President at the rooms except on nights devoted to the business of the Association. But that evening I assume that all the poets were to be there—most "informally" of course, to meet the famous traveler. As I now see the picture, Taylor was the central figure, in a full grown arm-chair—and he quite filled it too with his two-hundred-odd pounds of bigness—more than did the honors of it with his rich voice, his ripe experience of men and of the world; with a laugh that was contagious, an eye that was gloriously sympathetic, a head that was more than "leonine,"—for no lion would have unbent so naturally to become a splendid boy again as Taylor did that night. Richard Henry Stoddard sat by him, mostly silent, abiding the moment when the conversation might perchance need one of his keen, bright flashes of wit to give it a fresh twist. Taylor was telling some tale of the Old World—I know not what it was—and Stedman sat on the arm of the big chair, with one arm round the shoulders of the narrator. Bryant, white-headed, "Sphynx-like," as my notes have it, sat near, rarely speaking—"measuring out short sentences now and then as if they were precious." But when a new arrival carried the

company in sections elsewhere, then Bryant, to me, alone, opened somewhat. He spoke of Roslyn and his Summer home; his eager desire to get down there early; only his daughter was not quite ready to leave the town. There the poet lived among his trees and looked out upon the beautiful harbor, and rested. Rested—that was his thought; for there was little rest in the city for a man so much in the swim as he was. He didn't say that; but he did say that he had tried to make the arbutus, our New England Mayflower, grow in Roslyn woods—tried it again and again,—but had failed. The Mayflower would not come to Roslyn woods, nor would it come to his city home in a way to cheer, nor to the Century. Just then the poets came drifting back, Stedman at the head of them, and, if I remember rightly, Booth with him, and Stoddard. This was the group that remains pictured in my mind, now that I am older than any one of them at that period, except Mr. Bryant, the gray president of the Club—older, and the only survivor of all whose names I find entered in my notebook that night. Only that bit of conversation about Roslyn and the Mayflower remains. And my conclusion as to the white-headed poet among his younger brothers, whose names were already known over the length and breadth of the land—I wrote: "Mr. Bryant impresses me as one who in mixed company seldom comes out of his shell, or as one of the poetical temperament, like Hawthorne, whose thoughts are beautiful, but not easily converted into the currency of spoken language."

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One evening, in 1876, Stedman came to the Fraternity with Mrs. Stedman and Mr. Taylor, who was to read an essay on "Literature as an Art." It was my business as president to introduce him. My "notes" say of the essayist:

"He reads earnestly and well, pausing often with an evident desire to have the points sink in. More than ever he seems to me a hearty, full-souled man, of sound manhood. Traveler, journalist, lecturer though he is, his heart is manifestly in his poetical work."

One day a lady said to him: "Mr. Taylor, do *you* write poetry?" "Poetry?" he exclaimed, turning his spectacles full on her, "It is the best thing I do!"—And he forgave her.

I associate him constantly in the last year of his life, with Stedman and Stoddard. They were always together, the three, meet-

ing, mutually, at each other's homes, which in those years were nomadic in some degree. For the Bohemian in literature then as now carried his house on his back. . . .

In the early part of the year 1878, Taylor received the appointment of Minister to Germany. . . . Stedman talked to me of the important Dinner to Taylor—not the last, but the grandest. It was employing his time and his best faculties; for he was on the Committee of Arrangements, and being one of the few men of letters on the committee, the duty of arranging for that class fell largely on him. Among the guests expected, he said, were at the least a hundred trained speakers, and how to distribute happily among them the toasts and speeches was no trifle. The writers alone, and the artists, for whom he must look out, were peculiarly sensitive as to the proper shading in the rank list. . . .

They were different, all, in their gifts. Who was ever quite like Stoddard? With a temperament which sometimes led him to bathe his genius in the bitter waters of the sea near which he was born, sometimes to feel more exquisitely than any man I have known, the sweet dews that fall in the morning on every flower that opens to love? Who could touch so well as Stedman the key that responds to every lighter mood and catches the ear even of the man who takes down the shutters in the morning to begin a strenuous work-day? Stoddard was steeped in the more contemplative music of verse. Down to the last moment of life he wrote; he couldn't help it. One of the strangest, weirdest, yet perfectly characteristic examples of this I find noted in Stedman's talk at the Century. When the grim poet's only son was dying, the father wrote five poems. These he afterwards showed to Stedman. "Two," said the latter, "were good; the others showed an inconsecutiveness of thought—almost a wildness of mood." I was at Stoddard's house next day, and he showed me the poems. Of the good ones, he liked best one that he called "Death and the Shuttlecock." It was published, I believe, in the Philadelphia *Evening Post*. "The poem wrote itself," said Stoddard. "I did not have anything to do with it. My boy in his dying days paced back and forth between his room and mine. 'Death is casting the shuttlecock,' I said to myself, and the poem came." If Stoddard ever wrote verse again, I do not know of it. He died, and his wife died, within the year.

Sad enough were some of those evenings at the Century. Per-

haps I have called back too many of the sort. Let me give a picture of another kind, in which Stedman was also a part. He could not be otherwise, for the Century was at that time almost the only home of the men of letters and of the brush. No picture of the time, and of his activity as a literary man in that culminating period of his genius, could be complete without its grotesque side as supplied now and then by "Twelfth Night" frolic at the Club. They came, as such things should, at irregular intervals. Neither the time of them nor their peculiar character could be predicted. The time was in the keeping of a very few; the mood and the manner was a composite of many minds. All were expected to unbend. Those who were naturally supple-jointed in the mind, became the choice spirits, and led off the witches' dance. But all caught the music of the hour and oiled the rusty hinges of the knee. I have in my memory two such wild evenings, and fairly-well detailed in my notes of those days. The first was thirty-odd years ago—almost as far back, so it now seems to me, as those Salem nights of Old Colony times, when witches borrowed the paraphernalia of Bedlam and flew about the ears of good and holy men. Of our six hundred members, as many as three hundred assembled in the large upper room of the house on Fifteenth Street. Something in the variegated hues, which conflicting schools of color had unhappily visited upon the walls and floor of that gathering-place of all the arts, made it a suitable selection for the initial ceremonies. In a corner was a tall spruce tree, bearing unnatural fruit. In the center of the room, and stretched between chandeliers, was a peculiar figure which in my notes I find assigned to the dragon family. With some show of decorum an election was had, resulting in the choice of a ruddy merchant as Grand Almoner, and a small, cheery-faced Master of the Revels, with a worthy accompaniment of official advisers,—a duly assorted mixture containing all the contradictory elements that should exist in a good Cabinet. Among them I recall Eastman Johnson, short and stout, with shrewd round face and twinkling eyes; gray-bearded Stoddard, with a scholar's stoop of the shoulders; Collins and Whittredge. These being duly invested with the insignia of office—mainly fanciful red sashes—a little general with a shot-gun brought down the dragon of capacious paunch and some hundreds of paper caps fell out, to be scrambled for. Motley was the only wear that night, and such motley there never was before. The gallant Three

Hundred formed in procession, two and two, piloted by the Master of Ceremonies, and, following the traditional boar's head, filed past the tall spruce, taking therefrom suitable musical instruments —a tin trumpet for one, a drum for another, for a third a jewsharp, or harmonium, or French fiddle, etc.,—and so wound down the stairs to the Art Gallery, escorting the king and his court, amid such improvised music as a strong desire to "head the band" induced in each man. There was no conductor for this orchestra. No one waited to be "led." Each made by the straight road for Pandemonium,

"whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,"

began to smoke. The boar's head had disappeared in the course of the march, and, at the end, the king found his throne on the dais, and his courtiers tumbled into place. The common crowd took to the floor. No chairs were at hand. Only a few meager benches lined the walls. A Turkish rug softened parts of the floor, and there the Three Hundred finally lodged in such attitudes as are customary in Eastern lands where the houris are winged for Paradise. Some, however, after the fashion of the Romans, tried the easeful full-length, but the greater number preferred the prolonged agony of the posture cross-legged. Here youth and a spare build had advantages. A few caressed their knees on such corners of the Turkish divan as could be obtained. Others pressed their shoulder-blades against the crimson walls. The whole table of University degrees was stamped on the fine brows, but somehow the necessary cabalistical letters had been spirited away for that night. Divinity, Law, Literature, Music, the Wise Arts, and Fine Arts, and Arts merely Decorative, gave way to Arts of the Undecorated Boy just let loose from the Grammar School. Men who, on state occasions wear two stars on the shoulders; scholars who, on the University platform, turn out the crimson linings of Oxford gowns; judges, lawyers, physicians, heads of the colleges, renowned preachers, senators—all were there in a sort of heterogeneity inconceivable on Sundays, unless one can imagine a bishop playing the jewsharp, a general, the French fiddle, or a distinguished physicist rattling a pair of bones. For half an hour it was Bedlam let loose, each man running back to rollicking boyhood with such instrument as the sack had yielded him. It was then that the true

entertainment began. A corpulent judge from the law-courts, who had thriven on a salary of $8,000. a year, sat down to the piano and revived a bacchanalian song from his college days. The white-headed dean of the art tribe trolled forth a dolorous ditty. An interminable song all about an octopus came from a full-throated member of the Board of Health. A middle-aged merchant, with a face that was sanctity itself, told how a flash of lightning was half an hour getting down the chimney, winding and twisting this way and that, until it finally disappeared under the floor, and he was "d—d glad to see the last of it."—So it went on till the small hours of the morning. . . .

Those evenings at the Century rarely passed for me without a word with Mr. Stedman—sometimes only a glancing, meteoric word, but occasionally an hour of quiet talk. Often he would come in with a white choker on, and generally with some friend—a circumstance that seemed to indicate a lingering dinner elsewhere. A dinner carries with it intellectual excitement. With Stedman it was always intellectual. He never gave much attention to the viands, and when he came into the Club after such a session, it was never of the truffles, the mock turtle, the Johannisberger that he talked. He had the swift apprehension of the market, where the idea must be quickly caught, and with some sureness of ear; but at the Club this keenness of apprehension was utilized for purposes other than any detailed in books of trade. Yet a reminiscence of the wide margin of profit expected on Wall Street would now and then color his conception of the poet's rank. One evening, after the Club's removal to its present quarters, when a considerable advance in fees and dues had to be faced, he defended the advance persistently, declaring that any writer or artist who was fit to enter the Century would not find the expense too great. It may have staggered him a little, when I suggested that the Century would have been impossible for Hawthorne, even after he had arrived at the "Scarlet Letter" period; for Emerson, at almost any period during his best productive days; for Thoreau at any time; for Whittier, Poe, and for Lowell while he was writing his forceful poems—those years when he was eagerly looking for $15 a week. In city life, particularly its Club life, all things yield to the buoyant pressure of the "bulls," while the "bears" are ever feeding round the poet's door.

I remember an evening when Stedman came in from the Players,

where he had been giving a dinner, "rampant," as my notes put it, over some move by Tammany; he "wanted a hundred of its 'braves' decapitated by Vigilance Committee." They were not decapitated; neither was the democratic poem at the Whittier dinner very much amiss in its results. "A cordial utterance of a political opponent," says Whittier's biographer. "I thought it might be considered out of place," said the poet to me, "and so I asked that it might be heard in silence." But Boston in those days was, by the Bohemian group in New York, thought to "point with pride" a little too often to its own authors, who were seldom fully recognized in their own habitat as "reasonably good," until the proper note had come across the water from England "introducing" them, so to speak. A feeling of this sort—well, let us call it inter-urban jealousy—may have shown itself in Stedman's mood one evening at the Club, when the death of Longfellow was so exuberantly deplored that all lyrical quality seemed to have died with him. Stedman expressed impatience, not with the laudation, but with the seeming injustice to the younger men. He was thinking of the "craft," as he liked to call the rhymesters, and of a certain underrating of the New York and Western genius for song. It is certainly true that the New York and the Western newcomers expressed better the eager, active, accomplishing life of America—the real, not the ideal, life. I did not wholly agree with Stedman's point of view then. Indeed, in my small way, I had joined in the chorus of laudation. His inter-urban jealousy, if that was what it was, did not last long; it was the mood of the moment only. Perhaps the strain of the day had been too great for him. The nerves were apt to be tense after a day on a hot market in Wall Street. He loved the New England writers—particularly Whittier; and he was not slow to condemn his own compatriots of the big city and its neighbors. Severe on Whitman I found him one evening—severe, but discriminating. . . . What Whitman's verse had of quality he recognized then, as he often did in published writings; but he deplored the "content" of the verse, and the obtrusive method of marketing ideas which savored of archaic times; democratic ideas, Whitman would have called them, but ideas which American democracy has never thought of as its own. And yet Stedman too loved the elementary passions and was not unwilling to visualize them in their simple, not unwholesome exhibition.

Stedman's fellow members of the Century Association thus testified, generously and discriminatingly, of their love and honor:

Edmund Clarence Stedman was for forty-four years a loved Centurion. For us he was the one of his name and fondly we called him "Stedman," dropping all the rest, as did those in other circles where he was pre-eminent; indeed the country and the world were indifferent to his given names and to the many suffixes and titles with which his full name had been adorned, for above all the honors which he wore so gracefully was the crowning honor of his life, his work, and his personality. He came of old New England ancestry, of a stock that battled for fatherland, that cultivated learning and poetry, that sent him to Yale as a matter of course, and which, at the crisis, comprehended perfectly the impetuous onset of a nature which made impossible the completed routine of academic life, or later the restraints of a local career. Like millions who live and die without a chance to quaff the full cup of leisure, in draughts that commingle the bitter and the sweet, he belonged to the ranks of labor; but unlike most of these he was one of the elect few who sweat and toil but who likewise breathe the sweet airs of Arcady. His record as journalist and war-correspondent, as financier and banker, as family guardian and bread-winner, was marked by trials and sorrows beyond what most are called to endure. Yet he rose in victory above them all and on the highway of literature, as poet, critic, companion, and guide, his talent marched cheerfully, unweariedly, successfully. He long outlived the conditions and the age which stimulated his early efforts; he survived his companions and friends: Curtis, Ripley, Taylor, Stoddard, Aldrich and the others; he might have been a mourning, solitary man in the last period of his life. But no, there was honor to be won in the struggle for copyright, there was the throng of coming writers to be encouraged, there was the new age of aërial navigation to be imagined and brought under law, and above all there were the dear friends who thronged The Century and found the renewal of their powers in his talk, as he did in theirs. If present cheerfulness and the forward look be marks of youth, the latest epoch of his life was the youngest.

His place in literature was felt, I think, by himself, and those in his confidence, to have been virtually fixed in the age to which

his life belonged and in which he was a type. Poetry was his vocation, criticism his avocation, and all the rest—the banking, merchandising, agitating for reform—was the struggle on which he spent the surplus energy which he seemed to gather from exertion and experience. Imperious ideals drew him on, but time and space and stern necessity both impelled the intellectual powers he used and set limits to the soaring of his fancy. He was strong and fearless in his thought, but he was cautious and conservative in its expression. His selection and criticism of contemporary verse in both English-speaking lands were so tactfully done that in his honest, unsparing judgments there was no sting. He was too frank to be biting or petulant. His quips, jests, and bon-mots were trenchant and accurately aimed, yet no one took them otherwise than in good part. In conversation, as in his studied verse, the transitions from grave to gay, from fancy to reality, were constant, and revealed the inner light that showed the way in his conduct of life.

Philosophies and dogmas were detestable to him; the personality of what he saw as a natural spirit, the links of passing times and phases with each other, and with the present, interested him chiefly. He liked to rehearse his own ancestry as well as any other New Englander, but he could not rest on the laurels of those who were gone; their example spurred him to ever greater exertion. So with the phases of his life: he had no time for vain regrets; his was the pensive melancholy which is creative and rebuilds before the earthquake shock has ceased. While therefore he was in a way cosmopolitan, he was far more metropolitan. The larger the town, the more parochial its divisions and the greater its self-assurance. There is an urban *naïveté* comparable to rustic credulity. This narrow complacency Stedman abhorred, yet he realized that New York was an epic of America, if not indeed the epic. Its heterogeneous multitudes, its gigantic passions, its concentration of power, its radiation of influence outward into all the earth—behind these all there must be a creative organism, elusive but real. This he sought diligently to find, and if it never revealed itself fully, it did at least partially as one manifestation of the world spirit, as both a descendant and a progenitor. Many of its avatars he sought to express.

But we celebrate him chiefly as the ideal Centurion. Admitted at thirty-one to the select company of older men who formed this

association, his youthful vigor energized and realized the aspirations of his seniors. He was largely responsible, if not entirely, for the founding of this library and the establishment of the Committee on Literature. There was no honor he so highly esteemed as the opportunity to render service here, and he lamented the subtle changes which seemed to exclude from our membership the younger members of the literary guild, who maintained, as he felt, the sound tradition of the older American literature. But, impatient as he sometimes was, his devotion was strengthened with every year. He wrote our anniversary ode with tender insight; he was faithful in the performance of the special duties we imposed upon him; his dearest friends were the companions he found here, and his stately obsequies were conducted, as was fitting, by Centurions, with the delicate sensibility associated with family ceremonial.

THE AUTHORS CLUB

"We are forming a select *Authors Club* here,—about fifty members," writes Stedman in 1882, and later to another correspondent he wrote: "'The Authors Club' may turn out well—I hope so. It started among a little group of friends, who resolved to make it general and representative, independent of cliques, etc. *I* proposed to have it embrace both sexes—and indeed the women authors of this city are even more notable than the men; but I was at once 'set upon.' They wouldn't like the tobacco-smoke, would they?"

To Boker, he wrote:

You may have heard of the new *Authors Club*, now successfully organized. At present the membership is limited to *sixty*, one fourth of whom must be non-residents of New York. After New Year's, under the Constitution, only one new member can be elected at each meeting. (Meetings fortnightly, on Wednesday evenings.) Last night there was a fine gathering, with Punch, Pipes, etc. At the executive meeting, before the Punch, it was thought expedient to elect a number of out-of-town men of letters, at once, subject to their own acceptance of the election. (Warner and others, chancing to be in town, were chosen at their own request.) Among these, Aldrich, Cable, and yourself were elected

unanimously, and I volunteered to confer with you—in a friendly and confidential manner, as *hereafter* no one will be elected except on application.

The Club is select, but catholic, and abhorrent of "sets" and "cliques." Nearly all our best New York authors, young and old, are in it. Expenses, purposely moderate: Entrance-fee, $15., annual Dues, $10. No President. An Executive Council. Object, literary and social good-fellowship, and the bringing of authors into closer union, independently of the publishers for whom they may work. We should all be charmed to have you join—and be honored besides. Of course you would stay over night with me, and with other friends, on your trips to New York. Should you write affirmatively, you will receive a formal notice of election from Mr. de Kay, the Secretary.

Mr. Stephen H. Thayer, the present Secretary of the Club, thus describes a happy Club-day of 1892, which shows Stedman's influence:

One notable characteristic of Mr. Stedman's temperament was its charming elasticity; the facility—which he possessed, of passing from the graver to the lighter mood. There was a fund of buoyancy in his nature which responded with keen relish to the holiday environment. The writer recalls with great clearness a day in which the Authors Club—members and their wives were spending the 30th of May—in 1892—Decoration Day—as guests at his home—"Edgewood," when nearly a hundred partook of dinner beneath the canopy of the great forest trees on the grounds; an event which was interspersed with hilarious jollity,—and in the midst of which Mr. Stedman was the very embodiment of pure enjoyment. There were present Richard Henry Stoddard, with Mrs. Stoddard and their son, Mr. and Mrs. Stedman, and many of the authors who, alas, are no longer with us. Many of us still here can bear testimony to the contagious vivacity which possessed Mr. Stedman on this day of good fellowship, though he was evidently quite unconscious of his leadership. During the day he was not slow in initiating little riding and walking excursions which contributed so signally to the spontaneity of the occasion. We assembled beneath the trees, at his solicitation after we had dined, and listened to readings and recital of poems by our then Club elocutionist Mr. Keese. It was in vain that Mr. Stedman pro-

tested against our listening to his "Door-Step"—read with fine effect by Mr. Mabie. Then the waiting carriages took delegations of the company across the Pocantico to the Sleepy-Hollow Cemetery, where, gathering about the resting place of Washington Irving Mr. Stedman recounted how, in that quiet seclusion, about thirty-five years before, he had stood by the open grave of the gentle humorist and prepared his report for the *Tribune* of the burial ceremonies on that impressive occasion; and further, he called attention to the deeply worn pathway up from the old Sleepy-Hollow Church to the plain marble slab that marked the spot; a pathway whose tracings are enduring evidence of a fame which is now so eminently assured in the annals of literature the world over. And again Mr. Stedman remarked on the disfigurement of this particular grave stone chipped by the rude chisel of the vandal pilgrim, and commented that it was but the crude expression of reverent sentiment on the part of the mutilator, who could not have meant it as ruthless violation of a sacred memorial.

That day—at the very portal of Summer, was a red-letter day to those of us who shared in its social freedom together; and its pleasures were enhanced twofold by the presence with us of Mr. Stedman, who imparted his blithe, unflagging spirit to us all. It was this happy faculty, so distinctly his own to an eminent degree, of casting off all consciousness of weightier affairs, and of abandoning himself to the fit enjoyment of the day that made the events of that time memorable; and this *gift* it was that fostered in his whole life long the genius of comradeship which was so vital in him to the very end. It impressed his personality upon his friends to a degree that is rare among the representatives of scholarship. He was socially and humanly magnetic, drawing about him men and women in the various walks of life—and which won to him the love of his fellows in spite of his critical and dominating intellectuality.

In 1895 a pathetic letter by Stedman to one of his Fellow-Founders upbraids him and others for nonattendance at the Authors Club, and seeks remedies for their forgetting that the Club was "of service in bringing about the *entente* which now exists among New York authors." "As for myself you know it is hard to get me into any new movement, but I have a way of hanging on to one in which I am already involved,

and the more strenuously in proportion to its need of support."

A noteworthy speech was delivered by Stedman, who was Chairman, in 1897, at a dinner given by the Club to R. H. Stoddard.

Professor James Herbert Morse, the ever kind and good friend of Stedman, gives the following recollections:

The Authors Club was peculiarly dear to Stedman; and he to the Club. Often he must in his busy life have been tempted to shy at some of the calls on him in its service; but if so, interest in the "boys" got the upper hand. He looked upon the Club as the unifying instrumentality in the city for the literary class—for the "craft." And so it was. Many joined it who had their spurs to earn; but even these brought their little "gifts." They were there because they loved Letters. Yes, Stedman loved poetry and the poets. How jealous he was for the poets who dealt seriously with their art is clear enough from the following:

45 East 30th Street,
New York, October 13, 1885.

Dear Mr. Morse:

You are perfectly right in relation to the *Tribune* fifth column, and I have been wondering whether anybody had the same feeling about its doggerel that I have had. Curiously enough, I have several times told Miss H——— (who, of course, has nothing to do with the matter) that I considered this vulgar innovation something that might tickle the "groundlings," but must make "the judicious grieve," and that in the end the old *Tribune* would lose more than it gains by it; also, that I should tell Mr. Reid as much the first time I might see him. Saying the same thing to one of their leader-writers the other day, he told me that all the staff, except the friend who makes up this trash, were of my opinion. Aside from the incongruity and loss of dignity involved, when a great journal fills up its editorial page with buffo and nonsense verse, the practice throws all poets and poetry into popular contempt—aids, I say, to make the former ashamed of their birthright. . . . I am glad to know that you, too, "lay up these things in your heart."

Sincerely yours,
E. C. Stedman.

Mr. Stedman felt that his time and the time of the "veterans" was not altogether lost, if some of it were given to polishing up the crude talent of a tyro. He gave too much, and too kindly sometimes. At the Irving Dinner he told me that as many as a hundred and fifty volumes by authors lay on his table at home, to all of which he must give some attention. . . .

The subject up for discussion on a certain night at the Authors Club was a rather personal one: "How did you attain your present reputation as an author?" All who spoke were expected to make the point clear. Thus, Bronson Howard—eminent dramatist, head of the clan, wholesome, charming as a raconteur, rich in experience and in experiences—was made to stand and deliver. So was James Whitcomb Riley from the "wild and wooly west," and Colonel George E. Waring, fresh from his honors as the organizer of the "White Wings." When Joseph Jefferson's turn came, with that inimitable grace of manner which showed the birth of an idea, the recognition of it by its masculine parent, the happy moment of sharing it with his friends, and the engaging smile with which he handed it over to the open-mouthed neighbors already prepared to welcome the infant,—he began: "I attained—what little distinction I have—as an author—by writing *one* book. I retained it by—*not* writing another."

Stedman's appreciation of art was conspicuous throughout his life, and especially in its dramatic and musical phases. His membership in the Players Club also bears witness to the fact.

Concerning Mr. Stedman as a speaker, Professor Morse writes:

In after-dinner speech-making Mr. Stedman's skill was of slow growth. Such a form of presenting ideas to the public is not in general expected of the poet, who ripens a thought slowly, plucks it thoughtfully, pares it, slices it, spices it with condiments of enchanting delicacy, before he serves it to a choice guest. The true speaker, on the other hand, must take the phrase that comes, and worry afterwards over its crudenesses. Eloquence, even in the off-hand form that is due after coffee and cakes, is "inextricably mixed up with practice," said one who knew. Stedman was quite aware of this, and I think was for long unwilling to venture

anything more than a brief contribution to the "talk on the feet." His mind was too full, too discursive. Later, he learned to speak, but after due preparation, when an intrusive trope was quite capable of disjointing a well-prepared speech. I found him, on one occasion, at an important meeting over which he was to preside, slipping into a corner of the platform where the literary clans were gathering, drawing from his pocket a bundle of "notes," saying that they were all in a muddle in his mind; he must look them over. And he seemed not ungrateful when I said: "I will sit down by you and 'keep the gates.'" The frequent call to duty as presiding officer, particularly when he was president of the New England Society, gave him opportunity and a certain swing, I imagine. One April morning, when many of us were on the way to Philadelphia on a sad duty, to attend the funeral of Frank R. Stockton, he began the journey—three of us being together—by saying that he was "completely exhausted." He had presided at a New England Dinner the previous evening and had spoken for the twenty-first time, he said, during the course of the Winter, in connection with his position as president. Then, as we rode through the monotonous levels of New Jersey, and looked westerly among the woodlands that pass for forests, and the hills that pose as mountains, he was moved to reminiscing. The sad errand on which we were bent sent his thoughts back into the years when he had wandered as a gunner, as poet in search of beauty, as an historical student, in all the region within thirty miles of New York. He knew, he said, every foot of New Jersey and of Connecticut within that radius. His "exhaustion" disappeared; he reproduced scenes, recovered faces, and set a background for a life that made the monotonous meadows and the low-lying hills enchanted ground. Over to the right of us, and northerly, lay the uplands of Morristown, where the home of our friend Stockton had for so many years been set on the edge of the old classic ground never to be forgotten by Americans. On and on he went, warming up to the theme, full of it, eloquent, and absolutely unconscious that he was "exhausted." At last, as we neared Philadelphia, he said: "I can't talk much to-day; my throat makes it impossible."

Stedman was also a member of many other Associations; of course of the Yale Club, and of the Yale Alumni, of which

he was for several years Vice-President. On many notable occasions he made an Address, or read a Poem; among these we may mention: his Remarks at the grave of Bayard Taylor, and at the Memorial Meeting at the Goethe Club, 1879; at the grave of Richard Henry Stoddard, 1903; Aldine Dinner to Stoddard, 1872; Papyrus Club Dinner, 1879; Typothetæ Dinner, 1886; Memorial Exercises in Honor of O. B. Frothingham, 1895; Stevenson Memorial Meeting, 1895; at the Players, in memory of Edwin Booth, 1898; Hoi Scholastikoi Dinner, 1901; Dinner to Hamilton W. Mabie, 1901; Reception to Dr. Collyer on his 80th Birthday, 1903; Dinner to Colonel William C. Church, 1903; Galaxy Dinner, 1903; Dinner to John Morley, 1904; Testimonial to Madame Modjeska, 1905; Norwich Board of Trade, 1906.

CHAPTER XXX

LAST YEARS

Somewhere in 1893, Stedman said to a friend: "You speak of the country. *I* think a country Winter—with its outdoor air and prospect, and its indoor fire, books, privacy —an ideal delight. It is years since I could experience it. I see no chance of ever gaining one season for myself." But in three years he could say: "We shall move in the Spring to a larger house, Lawrence Park, Bronxville, [N. Y.]—as a step toward sexagenarian retirement! It is not far from there to Woodlawn, where my beautiful Mother's dust lies waiting for me."

"It is not suburban in the least," he wrote later. "You might imagine yourself in New Hampshire so far as hills, valleys, rocks, and trees are concerned." To "Casa Laura," as he called his pretty Colonial house, he moved his rare and beloved Books of Association, his favorite glass and china, pictures, furniture—to him, truly, *Lares et Penates*. His neighbors became his friends, and he was interested in the growth and affairs of the community. He had his little plot of garden—for cultivating flowers or vegetables—and was happy to share with neighbors. He still came often to the city—"All I can do is to swing as a pendulum back and forth between Bronxville and New York, and stop ticking very early in the evening." Open fires welcomed him, and his visiting friends, and their invitation to cosy reading vied with the commands of his goading duties. Of these he wrote: "I was fated, first, to endure isolation, and afterward—distraction. Then there comes a time in every life when strength diminishes while 'duties' increase. Because one still marches in the ranks, his friends take small account of this, but expect him to drill and fight as usual. At last he suddenly falls out, and at last,—is forgiven for not answering at roll-call."

In December, 1900, after a serious illness, and the completion of "An American Anthology," he went for a few weeks to Bermuda: from there on Christmas Day he wrote to H. H. Furness:

My dearest Furness: I flout no more at reincarnation, for this is the voice, so long silent, of one refreshed and happy to keep step with you "for some few suns" of the new century. Here it comes over me that, as no mail-steamer will sail before the 31st, I am speaking from the last Yule-tide of the Old Century to you in the first week of the New. To you indeed of all most honored colleagues,—for am I not in these still-vex'd Bermoothes, of which you here seem to me the lessee *in perpetuo* from Him who holds the Isle of Divells by right of eminent domain? I know 'tis a far cry from Tunis or Naples by route of this meridian (W. 65°), but distances matter not to the Enchanted, nor to one that has had "at least two glasses 'twixt six and now" of the "dew" fetched by a dusky-tropic Ariel,—though why that sprite brings it in a flask labelled "Glenlivet" is beyond conjecture. In any case, this will be Prospero's island while I am here; my memories of Sommers and Strachey, of the storm that drove me hitherward, the big sea that smashed our vessel's upper house, the cave in the hill across the Bay, the cloven cedar (there are no pines) gnarled and twisted by a thousand swirling gales,—all these shall make it so despite even your own commentary. Small wonder (for *The Tempest* was the first of your volumes to come into my possession) that I thought of you on my passage, and that at every turn I almost think to meet you.

Then, too, my guilty conscience! A misfortune is more criminal than a fault: the latter is of ourselves, the former a stigma from on high. When I got back to ordinary voyaging, after weathering a "grand climacteric," my worst scar was the knowledge that one of your princely gifts—at this distance I think it the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (but certainly *not* the *Much ado*)—had not even obtained my humble thanks; neither had you known that I was flat in bed with a heart that skipped one beat in three. It seems there were a selected few to whom my secretaries dared not write, knowing that the gifts and letters of these must be reserved for my own script, and none other,—if I should pull through. And still another of your progeny would have been cooling its

heels in my study, but for that pitiable fire, and crying out o' me on my return to life's sweet obligations! Well, well! I don't yet understand how 1898–99–1900 have slipped by, nor what belonged to this year or that, nor why—after such a suspension of being—my eyes are dimmer and I am taught each morning that a hair in the head is worth two in the brush. To all this I would not refer, were I not more willing to weary you than to have the best of gentlemen and scholars believe that *anything* (short of Ferdinand's palsy when he drew his sword) could have made me neglect the least remembrance from his hand. After my own grewsome book was out, 'twas all we could do to remove to town before my departure; I expected soon to be here, and, rather than write you hurriedly I have brought your letter with me for answer from these coral reefs.

Now my dear Furness, since I knew you—which was as when Pantagruel found Panurge whom he loved all his life—I thrice have been proud indeed. *You* shall make me the recipient of no more of your noble volumes. In my smaller way I am of your craft, and I know all the toil and moil, and cost, and inadequate returns—except in the world's honor, and your "own exceeding great delight"—for this your consecration. I have had the charm of your largess; hereafter I wish the pleasure of selecting each fresh Variorum issue as the book of its year which I present with due ceremony to myself.

The happiest of New Centuries to you! Your birthdays are not like those of commoners, but movable feasts reckoned by Time at each date of a Play's completion. Live long and round them out. Longevity is of itself a kind of genius, and yours by inheritance,—there is no reason in nature why you may not finish the New Temple, though my eyes will never see it nor my ears hear your *nunc dimittis*. But I glory in its steadfast growth.

How much better I think of our first hundred years of song, if their Anthology does not seem to you—who dwell in the spacious days of great Elizabeth—utterly void of significance! I was much surprised when our *Tribune* reviewers, often sniffy over the home product, declared that the new book was a fair match to the Victorian. Yet if you knew the myriad booklets of well-finished, dead-level, versicles I had handled, you would comprehend my welcome of any variant. . . . The selections that move you to Homeric laughter were all, among hundreds, that were *structural*

in the least; yet read them a second time and there *is* something in them, though they *were* originally discovered by T. W. H. whom, sacredly *inter nos*, Clarence King books as "sired by a second-class Greek and damned by a Puritan mother." . . .

Most like you have seen Bermuda with its San Remo shores, its lagoons, its green hills dotted with cottages and villas of pure white coral limestone, its roses, oleanders, vines purple and yellow, that turn Christmas into May-day. I met Sycorax this morning (under a royal palm) half-negress, half-Carib, bent like a hoop. I would give my return-passage ticket to light upon you here in some garden study, reading the next Play's proofs. President Eliot is bungalowed beyond a distant light-house, but I'll not intrude upon his hermitage—which he must have sought out with care and need. I shall be in New York again, D. V., by mid-January, at 116 East Nineteenth Street. (One always writes "D. V." with the Gulf Stream before him—though the mate said the reason why they had no service on board, Sundays, was because the trip was "so short that it seemed hardly worth while." This I take to mean that they think it requires more than—say fifty-six hours—for the Devil to catch them.) Meanwhile, and long after, the Lord have you in his keeping. This is my first letter written for the pleasure of it since my illness: hence its size, but you can read it, as the Dwarf married the Giantess, by sections, for its writer is with all esteem and affection. . . .

On June 25, 1903, Stedman received this request:

On behalf of many of your friends in the field of letters, we beg you to do us the honor to be our guest at dinner in New York City on the eighth of October next, or at any later date during the present year that may be agreeable to you.

Faithfully yours,

Henry M. Alden	William Dean Howells
Thomas Bailey Aldrich	Robert Underwood Johnson
Edward L. Burlingame	Thomas R. Lounsbury
Samuel L. Clemens	Hamilton Wright Mabie
Richard Watson Gilder	Brander Matthews
John Hay	Bliss Perry
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	Francis Hopkinson Smith

Henry van Dyke

Gratifying as this honor was, Stedman felt compelled to send this answer to R. U. Johnson:

I *must* summon up the nerve to write you, with respect to your kind note of July 2d and the beautiful, in every way notable, summons to a Dinner on my 70th birthday—signed by fifteen of the most distinguished of our fellow writers—which I herewith reluctantly return to you. It is my hope that you will find a way out for me by reporting to any inquirers—among those who do me so much honor—that you found it would be best not to tender this invitation under my present conditions. In other words, is it not possible to consider it as not having been delivered?

It is only because this possibility has occurred to me that I am at last able to write you at all. For a month I have been helpless to brace up and do so; and even to-day I have been for hours trying to get up the courage. The matter, with other things, broke me up during the first half of July. Since then I have got along by dint of work upon the article which the *Century* is to have on the 15th instant.

In the first place, I am profoundly touched by the affection of Richard Gilder and yourself, and yet I did not suppose you considered me so weak as to have the least reserve or affectation when I assured him and you that I *could not*, this year, carry off such honors as you had it in your hearts to extend to me.

Of course no greater, more exquisitely conceived, goodness has ever been extended to one of our guild. This makes my dilemma serious indeed. I recognize at once that the invitation is signed by editors of our four great magazines, by the foremost English scholars representing the four allied Universities, and by seven other chiefs of American literature. Never was there a list of signatures so eclectic. I know, I feel, it all. Such an invitation can *not* be formally declined, unless its recipient is prepared to leave his country forever.

All the same, I am compelled by a situation absolutely beyond my control, not to make the effort—which would be futile—to be the guest at a Dinner in my honor at any time this year. I cannot give you the conjunction of reasons, which would render it *impossible*—it would require sheets of paper, nor can I go through with the ordeal of trying to tell them to you in person—but my family, my counsel, my business *intimes*, my physician, who

know the triple coil I am in and the burdens and obligations they are helping me to meet the coming season, will unite in assuring you that it *is* "impossible."

If I pull through at all it will be by a close shave. As it is, I am securing, in default of any chance to get change and rest, seclusion, regimen, sleep, with every MINUTE mortgaged until near the end of next Winter.

I say nothing of my increasing sensitiveness about inviting public attention at a time when I have done nothing for some years to deserve it, or my dread of all the letters and regard which October will surely bring upon me.

You can't understand with what pain I write this letter, which I feel must sorely embarrass my two dearest working colleagues,—a pain overpowering even the gratitude and pride which a man far worthier than myself should feel upon receiving such a testimonial from such a body of men.

Twenty-five years before, John Hay had written to Stedman,—"We tongue-tied Saxons generally go down in silence, but I would like once at least, to tell you how much I regard and esteem you as a writer and as a man." At the 70th Birthday Dinner, Mr. Hay had planned to say, among others, these words:

It is a life, I will not say for our friend to be proud of, for we know too well the dignified and philosophic poise of his character to associate with it any idea of vainglory,—but it is a record and career of which his friends are justly proud. He was born a poet and he has lived faithful to the goddess; but you would seek in vain for any sign of poetic license in his life. He has shown that the highest gifts are compatible with the most rigorous industry, the most stainless honor. He has never turned away from his ideals, nor has he ever despised the homely virtues of our workaday world. Great poet, honorable man, good citizen—what better lot could any mother pray for at the cradle of her child? . . .

I remember how in an hour Stedman grew famous with that Tyrtæan ballad which rang like a reveille in the troubled and clouded morning of the great war, where the poet's voice gave forth the deep inspiration of the prophet. It was when the scaffold was building for John Brown. I have not lost the sonorous refrain in forty years: . . .

As Mr. Stedman began, so he continued. There has not been a year of his life in which he has not done some good and permanent work in literature, made some conscientious and valuable contribution to criticism, borne some brave and cogent testimony in behalf of good taste, good morals, and good citizenship. The standards of this country in letters and in life are higher because he has lived.

We offer him, on this day on which he begins what Victor Hugo called *la jeunesse de la vieillesse*, our heart-felt congratulations, in which love, admiration, and gratitude are mingled for all he has done and for all that he is.

To John Hay.

December 31, 1903.

I hope this will reach you on New Year's Day. You are shut in, worn down by your superb service for our country—justly pronounced—not only by those honored by your love and friendship, and who adore you personally, but by all the thinking world, —our best Minister of State since Webster.

Here I have been interrupted by an old gentleman, a Democrat, who has called to steal my time. Having told him that I have vowed to let nothing interfere with my writing this long-delayed letter to you, he has begged me to say in it that you "have the love and confidence of many an unknown friend." Doubtless he speaks truly for the better element in his own party. What is more, even our friends of the *Evening Post*, I observe, never bring "a railing accusation" against the State Department, as it exists. The Gordian Knot of the Columbian affair was cut with startling suddenness. The amenities were brushed aside. Although I am an old-time familiar of the Isthmus and advocate of the canal by that route, my first feeling was one of surprise that things went exactly as they did, with you as Secretary of State. My second feeling, in which the country now seems to share, was it must be all right—because you assented to it. Probably it is not usual that one's *intimes* have the greatest respect for his capacities in a sovereign position. In your case the exceptional fact is that those who have known you as a friend, from youth, and who really love their country—among whom I trust I am one—from the moment you entered the Cabinet troubled themselves no more with forebodings. At that time I was for once content: I have

so well known your innate patriotism that, having my own conception of your character and your powers, I said—Well, I should not worry about this administration.—My man is at the helm.

Personally—and I am at an age when my interest, if not academic, is at least unselfish—I wish "my man" were skipper instead of pilot, or that I might live to see him in command. But even if the country had the chance to put him there (which I verily believe it would do if it had the chance) I know the loyalty and honor that would stand between.

Did I receive your fine picture, the letter, the undelivered remarks? Alas, that you should have had to ask me. The portrait has been framed, and I have hung it in my study at Casa Laura (Bronxville) with more affection and pride than I thought my old heart could still feel. And your letter—your tribute—the fact that you intended to leave your great post, to come here, to speak thus of me and for me—these things to me, by choice and circumstances a withdrawn and philosophic enjoyer of the careers of two or three of my lifelong friends, have been such a happiness and satisfaction as I never expected to obtain in the years still left me. You cannot imagine,—because all men of your station and nature are simple-hearted, preferring others in honor to themselves,—how your conduct and sentiment in this matter have affected me, how unusual they seem. They certainly are enough to remove the last grain of cynicism from the make-up of a cannier heart than mine. Again, to see how you retain your ideals is an inspiration, and of itself, I assure you, a timely and precious aid toward keeping "my heart green" beyond the Arctic circle.

You see I am writing so much because you are ill in Washington, and my love goes out to you the more for the three prolonged illnesses which have used up half of my last five years. Moreover, you can read this on your journey South, and know that it is the warmth and fulness of my feeling which prevent me from my sometime compactness of expression.

At last I may tell you why I have been seemingly such an ingrate. I cannot and need not explain the succession of events in 1903 which placed me irreparably behindhand with all those friends whom I never address through my secretary; but they include successive deaths, personal illness, a birthday, a golden wedding, and everybody's affairs except my own. These would have made

no difference, but those duffers at the Century Club never let me know of your parcel (picture, letter, etc.), until it had been lying there for six weeks or more. When I finally received it, we were in much trouble. My wife was desperately ill—very low indeed with valvular disease of the heart, and at one time it seemed doubtful that she could rally. She came out of the attack just as I was about resigning the Presidency of the New England Society, fearing I could not complete the arduous preparations for the important Annual Festival. I managed to go on with them, but was so overstrained that I could do absolutely nothing else. I wanted to write you quite a letter, and would not let my assistants do anything in the matter. I fear that none knows better than you the misery of having your most essential affairs, public and private, await the passing of the helplessness of physical insufficiency; though sometimes, I doubt not that, like Richelieu, *you* can make a breakdown serviceable. Nothing but death, which pays all debts, can ever atone for conduct which I cannot "explain," and which justly may have alienated some of my most honored friends. You have trusted me, else you would not have written me again, on the 24th. The letter reached me Christmas, but I collapsed after the huge effort of the 22nd, and until to-day could not write you—which I should have done as I designed doing, if your note of inquiry had not been received.

My dear Hay, our walks have been different and yours are a part of history. But we have shared certain ideals, tastes, sentiments, in common, and I sometimes believe that we comprehend each other more than we are comprehended by those far more closely associated with you, or with me.

In your first letter you ended by referring to the consummation of the Chinese Treaty. When that letter reached me, you were on terms with the new Republic of Panama! How must it seem to be marking out the ribs of the world! It is marvellous that a poet, like you, should be fated to concrete—I may say—his wildest imaginings. And how much greater our day, and your scope, than those of Richelieu whom I named, or of Greece and Rome and the older England. Another country, and the earth will seem smaller than it was said to seem to Alexander. Well: it *is* smaller than either your soul or mine. The Powers restore you and guard you, for the land's sake, and—now I am selfish—for the satisfaction of your attached friend and lover.

To George S. Hellman.

October 23, 1903.

You would have been compelled to receive a long descant of some sort, from me, ten days ago, if the *Herald* had not "given me away" so openly on the Sunday after I crossed the dead line. For it was in my heart to write, with leisurely enjoyment, every one of the blessed damosels and squires who conceived and carried out their beautiful design for a "consolation" gift to their old knight. Nothing could have touched me more to the quick with affectionate emotion than just this remembrance. I have learned that, whoever conceived the idea, it is to you that I owe the perfect taste and beauty with which my inkstand has been consecrated by its inscriptions. You may be sure that it will hold its place where it belongs, on my work-table, and be valued much as Galahad might have prized the Grail—had it stayed with him. For of Heavenly Love we may dream, but know nothing, while from the currents that flow between earthly hearts—young and old—we do gain our most real and exquisite compensation. I held up quite stoically, not to say cynically against various preludes to my 70th birthday, until the tribute from my peerless little "Circle" came in—but that at once proved to me that my tear-glands were not yet atrophied. It broke me up—or down—instantly and entirely. By the way, was there ever a more charming rosary of names than that of the seven fair saints: Beatrix, Laura, Mary, Rose, Anne, Zona and Margaret? Well, you have made me feel that there is "something given to us in life," and that in some respects I have had my share. Best of all, I am sure of keeping to the end the loyalty which this bronze beauty symbolizes.

In the midsummer of 1905, after a pathetic lingering illness of two months, Mrs. Stedman died. The loving and tireless devotion bestowed by their cousin, Dr. Thomas L. Stedman, who had for many years been as a younger brother, was of the greatest comfort to the patient sufferer and to her watching husband. "I have kept," says Mr. Stedman, "my vigil of over half a century and, whatever may have been my shortcomings,—and we none of us are worthy of our wives,—I have been able to fulfil my boyish vow that

the sole of my Laura's foot should never touch rough ground. As lives go, I have no right to complain, but I think the wrench of separation is the harder for the long welding together." And to their friend—Miss Reese:

Dear Lizette: You *know* that she loved you—and her loves were chosen well, and, when fastened, held to the last. Few have a union so long continued, and I have no right to cry out, subdued as we all are to the inexorable law of final merger: but the disruption is doubtless all the more severe for the years in which we two became welded into one. It *is* lonely, though the house still has a Laura to its name, and the little successor to its conduct is proving herself in every way a fit one. But how often, daily, I start to tell something to my wife—and then realize, with Othello, that "I have no wife." I am touched by your words of comfort, and if I have no *conviction* such as yours I trust that I shall never quite forego the *hope:* at my age I am poorly fitted to confront the troubles and perplexities that follow upon such a loss, and I can see that it is well that my companion has gone before me: poor girl, she would have been all unequal to them. I never thanked you for your letter on my birthday, but do so now. And when we know how we shall live, and where, I hope to see you again. I have been especially impressed by the many tributes to my wife's personality, from friends who loved and understood her—*her* friends, rather than *mine.*

To R. W. Gilder.

November 2, 1905.

My beloved R. W. G.: To-day is the 52d anniversary of the Norwich Day, every moment of which I so well remember, when Laura and I, two veritable children in age and experience (and she, at least, in innocence) ran away to get married—with not even a Boots and a Holly Tree Inn awaiting us!—She is not here to receive one of the gifts that she never failed of on this Anniversary. What can I do but to send my thoughts and her sweet memory to a few of those nearest and dearest friends who knew her as she was. In such wise your letter truthfully characterized her, last July, and it was one of those to which I could not bring myself to rejoin with a graven card. Those I am now answering, from time to time, and very slowly and inadequately, as you see. For I

am not strong, and all my matters are in readjustment—in fact, I am quite at sea.

Laura talked to me of you more than once during her illness, and was touched by a reference to her condition which you made. I think that she felt a closer affection for you and Tom. Janvier than for any other men not of her own blood or household. You and Helena were among those to whom she wished me to give her love and appreciation.

In January, 1906, his son Frederick Stuart died. A few months later, Mr. Stedman sold "Casa Laura," taking an apartment at 2643 Broadway, New York City, which with books and mementoes he made homelike with his unquenched boyish ardor. To a friend he writes:

I am conscious of my seeming forgetfulness of you during a period doubtless long according to the calendar, but which has sped with me like a motiveless, hopeless, ineffectual dream. Since we were so much together, I have been more helpless for the enjoyment of comradeship than any friend you can have had in any place or time.

A year ago it would have been inconceivable to me that I should lose my wife, my oldest son, my godson, my devoted William Sharp, and now my favorite nephew and coeditor; that I should dismantle Casa Laura, spend four months in storing, assorting, burning, giving away, the impedimenta of a lifetime,—should break up my household, and go into retreat with sufficient furnishings for my needs, a man of seventy-two, still hoping to find the chance to do a few essential things at last. Here I am, for the first time emerging from the box-and-barrel month following the break-up, and very shortly I expect to find you in my "other armchair." But not many of my—of our circle: after a year's turmoil, I *must* have seclusion.

Despite this imperative need of seclusion, it was a satisfaction to Mr. Stedman to be "within hail" of many friends. He could now more often see his sister, Mrs. Nelson S. Easton, her husband and children; his cousins, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Stedman; Charles Henry Phelps, his inti-

mate counselor; his comrade, the portrait-painter, August Franzên,—and many others. It had always been a grief to Mr. Stedman that his sister, Mrs. Wm. I. Kip, lived in California, so far away: the visit to New York of herself and her husband gave their brother great happiness.

October 2, 1906, to William Winter, Mr. Stedman wrote:

My dear and lifelong friend: It may be that I shall meet you this week, for I have just returned from a trip,—my first in years,—in search of health, and I have accepted an invitation from Mr. Moody to go out, at last, and attend the first production of his new play. I cannot bear to see you without, at least, the knowledge that I have written to you, howbeit at the eleventh hour.

For the last year, a few hours daily in my best estate, have been all that a disabling heart-trouble has permitted me to give to writing or locomotion; nor have I written a published word,—except in memory of colleagues gone before. I took all your letters, and sacred letters from Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Cortissoz, Mrs. Hutton, and others near and honored, with me, to answer during my six weeks of retreat in our New England. But not one was I able to write as I desired,—and, indeed, I ran straight into T. B. A., and Mrs. Hutton, in Maine. This chance I am fain not to incur in your case, the case of the one of all most closely and most long associated with my memories.

"Love wins love," and in truth my whole heart goes out to you whenever I read your name, read,—as I do,—every word of your unique and unrivalled criticisms, your tender, eloquent lyrics. How true, how faithful you have been! How you have ever made allowance for my failing strength, "not equal to my day!" When I received that most touching and beautiful utterance, that lyric cry, evoked by the loss of your son Louis,—it was late in June last year,—my Laura, whom I wedded in my twentieth birth-month,—was rapidly sinking. I was with her, night and day, until she passed away in mid-July. Then you instantly wrote to me, from California; although months passed, thereafter, with enforced silence on my part, you did not fail to realize my cry of *à moi!* and to write me instantly, as none could write who had not himself been a man "of like sorrows." At last I am telling you how much all this endears you to me.

Nothing has ever happened to me in life, certainly not those inevitable and universal griefs, that could for a moment cause me to do otherwise than take a stronger hold on work: the trouble has simply been physical disability; and you are, too, at an age to know that however well an old man may look to others, his troubles increase with years, and he may have common but hidden weaknesses that steadily make him less equal to the offices of duty, friendship, necessity.

This is no plaint on my part; it is a confession, to assure you that you are not wrong in believing me, under all appearances, your devoted friend, your grateful comrade, who sets a triple value on your life and presence,—now that his other friends have mostly gone; as the Sibyl appraised her remaining books.

While you have seen nothing worth while of mine in print, for so long, I am constantly proud and in wonder over your strong and delightful continuance as a writer. It is claimed that one's power falls off in time. Honestly, I never took more pleasure in your style and thought than now. It is like Landor's avowal—"Fair as she was, she never was so fair!"—You don't know how I long to—first, collect my verse; secondly, write some Reminiscences and say what I know and think of you and some others. But I still have heaps of letters here: Here, where I have found secluded, lonely quarters, and have a spare room for *you* to stay in, when you are late in town, and before one of us hears his final call.

October 8, 1906.

My dear Robin MacKaye:

It is a whole year since you sent me, like a poet's son, a dear little letter in poetry, with a piece of your birthday cake. Though I was sick, and in tears, I ate it "for the sender's sake." We are each a year older, but I am approaching childhood, and you are leaving it. You must have thought me very ungrateful, but I never forget you. I treasure your letter, and your portrait by our great Mr. Franzén is right before me.

Accept this box of colors with my love. It is much finer than the little box which I had in my boyhood, and which almost made me resolve to be a painter.

Affectionately your friend and birthmate,

Edmund Clarence Stedman.

To T. B. Aldrich.

November 8, 1906.

My dearest Tom: I am not purposing to meet you *again*—as doubtless I shall on Saturday night—and certainly not to have your Arctic Transit occur, until at last I shall have written you. As to the 70th birthday: it was in my mind, so distraught as to time by the changes of my own recent years, that you would not be of age until 1907. Yesterday I found my error, in a paragraph on Alden's neck-and-neck quarter-stretch with you. As he is some inches longer than you, I suppose we may decide that he beats you "by a head." But here! I began with navigation, and am already, as in a dream-change, racing on the turf. In your case, O fortunate *Étoile du Nord* (at least, born under it) the seventy mark means nothing. A picture of you hangs, autographed, over my desk, and for my life—though the portrait must be thirty years old—I can see no difference between it and the retired Admiral whom I met last August in the streets of Bar Harbor—with his wife young as, and fairer than, ever, and whose son's yacht I contemplated from the shore-walk that afternoon and thought how perfect your life was, is, and apparently—and as I warmly trust—shall be. To have such a son and new daughter, with a steam-yacht named after the child of one's brain, beats all hollow the lot of the Village Blacksmith whose daughter's voice in the Choir "makes his heart rejoice."

I often have thought,—and in my heart I vow not begrudgingly, —of the far diverging ways of your lives and ours since that fated day at Lynn when we all were so happy in believing that they were to be very close together from that time forth. As you of course have understood, I have not since then been my own master for a single month. I have always managed to keep up a really beautiful home for Laura—and suited to my own status and friendships—until her death. Beyond that, all my earnings went to make good certain obligations, and I may say confidentially to you that—although I still have contrived to "burn my own smoke," I have had an income reduced by the three *long* illnesses of mine since 1898, and mostly have lived right "out of pocket." . . . But no matter how bloomingly one *looks* at seventy-three, the least over-heat or over-excitement, *if* he has had my heart-failures, knocks him helpless. *Per contra*, if your heart is sound (as I suppose), you will have more reserve power at eighty than I have now.

I am going out, for the first function since Midsummer 1905,—to dear old Alden's blow-out, where I shall meet you. But yesterday I had a shock in "Baron" Evans's suicide. You remember him of old? He had grown to be charming in his later years. And at any rate he was of our own day and generation; so Montgomery Schuyler and I have kept up our associations with him. He had a cancer, unknown to us, and so—made his quietus. Now see—he and John Hay and I all had October 8th for our birthday, and for years have had the habit of exchanging greetings on that date. Hay, the youngest, went first. I have Evans's birthday letter of October, 1906 before me. He was seventy-two. I, the oldest of the three, after years of sickness and sorrow, survive, but chiefly through seclusion and by ill-treating my best friends.

All this as some excuse for my seeming neglect of my oldest and nearest friend still left—yourself. You have shown me your gentlest side in allowing for it. I received last year, from Ponkapog, your tender letter after my lifelong wife, whom you knew in her fair youth—and who so often spoke of you to the very last, was taken from me, by a cruel illness which ended the feebleness and suffering of two years preceding. I was deeply touched by your words, but would not let another respond to them. Nothing could move me more than your comprehension of the first neglect ever paid by me to anything from T. B. A., when you wrote me again,—from Egypt—after learning of the frightful blow I had last January. I must tell you that poor, dear Fred. had become a splendid fellow, and for five years Laura and I had had his regained loyalty and thoughtful affection. I had grown to lean upon him—he was my constant and intelligent companion whenever he came East, and what would he not be to me now, in my lonely apartment with its one extra chamber ready for him. He left me (strong and well he seemed) on a Friday, promising to return on Tuesday—which he did, but in his shroud. Laura and I had long been ready—the one to lose the other. *Fred's loss haunts me night and day.*

By these extracts may we not look into his very soul?

I am heartbroken, almost, by the deaths of both Sharp and Harland. Poor gifted fellows—their feuds ended apace. Hay, my wife, Mary Mapes Dodge, Sharp, Harry H.—all within six months—all so dear to me. Last Summer I was at last to have for my

personal work! For nine months, though, I have been dead to the world. Am struggling heroically to make a radical change, but may die before I succeed.

I am back again in my snug apartment on upper Broadway, and as comfortable as a single man can be. Celibacy don't seem to suit us Dodges. Am busy at work again, having got up a little strength for the first time in three years.

The ranks are thinning fast. You too have been grieved by what I consider the untimely taking off of dear, blithe, gifted Tom Aldrich, our artist-poet and comrade. One of the finest things about him even in youth was his independence. Whether he made friends or foes, he never crooked the pregnant hinges of the knee, nor was there any writing up of one another in those days, after the fashion of the pushing modern generation. Each and all of us—you [Whitelaw Reid], Howells, Hay, Aldrich, Winter, I—simply did our work, comprehending one another without envy, and without meretricious aid.

Am distressed that my charities are now checked.

I have "thrown up the sponge," and you must consider me "constructively dead." Am old, old, old, and besides have about gone "over the hills to the poorhouse."

I say again that Shakespeare should have added to his lines

> "All that should accompany old age,
> As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,"—

another alleviation, viz.,

> "And savings quite proportioned to its needs."

We learn *wisdom* only through suffering—knowledge is another thing. But why should the gods, as in my case, constantly increase the bitter draught as the hour draws steadily nearer when wisdom availeth not.

May 17, 1907. The imminence of my trouble, and my present illness, have kept me awake all night. Of course, if my *strength* gives out, that is the end. My will never yet has failed—but I have made the mistake in letting none of my equals know of my

straits. There would be no straits, if I could still do my work, as for fifty-five years.

July 17, 1907. Even ——— writes to me to examine a book, *here and now*, for her; she in her Adirondack camp—I almost dying in this hot prison and forced to work for food.

In the Fall of 1907, Mr. Stedman wrote to George M. Gould:

My dear Friend: I devoted myself strictly to a rest-and-happiness cure in August, but now . . . I am free to write to, as well as think of, my close and valued friends. As one of these I have for sometime been learning to regard you. One makes few accretions, after seventy, to his "list of friends," but none coming within the aureole of your magnetic and humane personality and the charm of your unselfish intellectuality will ever fail to wish to grapple you to him, or to realize that if he ever were in trouble, it were fine to have you as a "very present help." I am thoroughly won, moreover, by your goodness to my brave little Chinka—to whom you have already been a father, and a guide, philosopher and friend,—and this in my own first lustrum of all sorts of disability. Now that I am writing at leisure—in the Stedman bungalow . . . where your name is held in great honor and affection, it is a good time to say all of this to you. . . . The publishers do not understand, as I do, that Hearn will in time be as much of a romantic personality and tradition as Poe now is. I strongly urged ——— to buy those books issued by three other firms on any terms, and in the end bring out a definitive edition of his complete works. . . . And now I must end with congratulating you upon the status in which you find yourself in this your natal month, and to assure you that your friendship is about the best thing that I have gained during these last troublous years of my own too extended life.

From the last entries in the diary:

November 20, 1907. At home, sick, all day, and at end of my means, and seeing plainly it is too late to complete even the first portion of my Memoirs, etc. Made gloomier by the Bibliophile Edition of Theocritus with so much derived from my suggestions —and my own never to be written.

November 24, 1907. I don't dare to think that I am seventy-four—I just jump up each morning to face the day without giving in altogether.

January 2, 1908. Never had such a left over burden of letters, besides books, including greetings, etc., and I need every minute for my own work and bread-winning.

Those nearest to him, especially his beloved daughter-in-law, who had long heartened him with a most unselfish and daughterly care and devotion, and his granddaughter, were now kept close about him; looking back on those last weeks and days they recognize that he was unusually anxious that the prized courtesies and affections of social and family customs should be kept in full observance. The little gifts carried with him when he called were as carefully selected and daintily offered as in the past. At the family dinner,—the old-time hour at which to talk over intimate and outside affairs,—the evening before his death, he was, says Mrs. Ellen Douglas Stedman, "more like himself than for days. He long had been," she adds, "putting on a brave face to the outside world," but he was now "unusually bright and alert." Did he, perhaps, forefeel the coming end, and was he smiling, even laughing, at Death, as he crowded the days and hours with social activities and duties? He followed his guests to the door, and keeping them a little longer, told "one more story" before *Good-night* was called,—as if pleading to be thus remembered. He was accustomed to leave the papers, books, etc., on his work-table so that he could easily resume his study or writing just where he had left off: this last night his books were balanced to the hour, and everything was arranged and ordered as if he were, indeed, going away upon a journey.

On the morning of Saturday, January 18, 1908, Mr. Stedman rose a little later than usual, and passed the morning at work upon his last essay. His mail was large, and he said: "Twenty-seven letters! What is the use!" After a late luncheon he passed to another room, and—fell!

Financial troubles and private griefs had crowded: his

diaries and his letters reveal that no necessarily lethal disease had stilled his blithe, brave spirit.

The funeral services were held at the Church of the Messiah, on the afternoon of January 21. His old friends, the Reverend Dr. Robert Collyer, and the Reverend Dr. Henry van Dyke, officiated. His nearest comrades were his honorary pall-bearers; his bier was followed also by delegations from his Clubs and Societies. Mrs. Jessamine H. Kavanagh sang "Shadow-Land" ("The Undiscovered Country"), and "Abide with Me"—the songs which at Mr. Stedman's request she had sung at Mrs. Stedman's funeral. The interment was on January 22, at Woodlawn Cemetery, his grave between those of his wife and of his son Frederick. The Reverend Albert D. Willson, rector of Christ Church, Bronxville, read the committal service—that which he had read at the funerals of Mr. Stedman's wife and son. It is regretted that the touching and comforting words by Dr. Collyer are not preserved, but we may give those delivered by Dr. van Dyke:

It is not easy to speak of the deep feelings that enter into this service. There are many men here to-day who belong to New York, and who are now remembering with gratitude the uplifting and strengthening influence of Edmund Clarence Stedman's loyal and unsullied friendship amid the whirling and exhausting life of the city. There are men belonging to the younger generation of writers, who recall with warm affection the generous welcome which this acknowledged master in the craft gave them when they began their work in literature. Honour and love are mingled in our thoughts of him; deep regrets for his departure consecrate this hour; and of all this I know that it will be impossible to speak half that is in your heart and mine.

No American has ever had a broader and deeper sense of the commonwealth of letters than Mr. Stedman. Delicately individualistic in his own work, he had a wide sympathy with all that pertains to the art in which his best energies were engaged, and a serious, liberal care for all the interests and the continuous life of the republic of literature. He believed that it is one of the vital arts, that it had a purpose and a ministry in the life of man. Yet

he was never blind or indifferent to the value of good workmanship. He held that no labour or skill is too great to spend on the fashioning of the cup that is to convey a draft of inspiration, of refreshment, of consolation to thousands of our fellowmen. We may cherish and express a just pride to-day in the work that he did,—in his singing verse, in his luminous and interpretative prose,—because it was done in the spirit of a man who labours for larger interests than his own. In his poetry and in his criticism he made his contribution to American Literature, believing it to be a branch of that great tree whose life is rooted in the past and whose fruitage of beauty, truth, and goodness is borne from generation to generation to cheer and to nourish the sons of men.

But better than his work,—and it must always be so when literature is sincere and vital,—was the man himself: so honourable, so sensitive, so brave,—rarely brave for one who could feel so keenly,—so unflinching, so steadfast, so glad to live and so glad to give the best that he had, in the midst of life's trials, doubts, and disappointments. You remember what Sir Walter Scott, when he was dying, gave as his last counsel to his son-in-law, Lockhart: "Be a good man, my dear." Well, I think we can bear witness to-day that our friend kept that motto, not only in the world of business where he toiled, but in the world of literature where he lived. And those of us who cherish the letters that he wrote to us when we were in trouble or in grief, know of a surety that he had in his heart the Spirit who is called in Holy Writ the Comforter, even the Spirit of Christ.

I want to quote a few lines of one of Stedman's poems, "The Protest of Faith."

. . . . . .

Let us be sure, my friends, that this inward vision, this longing, this aspiration, with whatever difficulty it may be held, with whatever sincere reserve it may be expressed in words, is indeed the source of such a life as that whose withdrawal from among us we mourn to-day. Such a life does not see death, but passes through it, into a clearer world,—a world without sin, beyond sorrow, above doubt.

Oh quick to feel the lightest touch
  Of beauty and of truth;
Rich in the thoughtfulness of age,
  The hopefulness of youth,

The courage of the gentle heart,
  The wisdom of the pure,
The strength of finely tempered souls
  To labor or endure!

The blue of springtime in your eyes
  Was never quenched by pain;
And winter brought your head a crown
  Of snow without a stain.
The poet's mind, the prince's heart,
  You kept until the end,
And never faltered in your work,
  And never failed a friend.

You followed, through the quest of life,
  The light that shines above
The tumult and the toil of men,
  And shows us what to love.
Right loyal to the best you knew,
  Reality or dream,
You ran the race, you fought the fight,
  A follower of the Gleam.

We lay upon your well-earned grave
  The wreath of asphodel;
We breathe above your peaceful face
  The tender word "*farewell!*"
And well you fare, in God's good care,—
  Somewhere within the blue,
You know to-day your dearest dreams
  Are true,—and true,—and true!

Among the thousand evidences of love and esteem received by the surviving members of the family, one was doubly pathetic, from Mr. Stedman's son Arthur, who himself died within the year:

Sicilian Muses! Say that Pan is dead,
  Who wandered where the lofty towers arise
That mark the contest for a lesser prize,
The while he wore the laurels on his head,

Far from Sicilian Arethuse he fled,
Yet oft returned and viewed with loving eyes
The spring perennial that all drouth defies,
From sacred courses by Apollo fed.
Say that a nymph and faun, erstwhile so gay,
Who loved to dance the while he played or sung—
And gathered reeds his pan-pipes to prepare—
Now through the oaks make this their plaintive lay;
Sadly they walk, with heads and hands down hung,
And breathe their sorrow to the silent air.

A Meeting in Memory of Mr. Stedman was held at Carnegie Lyceum, January 13, 1909. Mr. R. W. Gilder was Chairman, his words of introduction were these:

Though his song and service were for the nation and the English tongue, he was *our* poet in a close and peculiar sense. Though he sang of New England and of the Carib sea, and of that no-man's-land of the poet which is the land of all men and of all times, he chanted ballads and lyrics of our own town; he echoed its spirit, in the early and the later day; he put into forms of poetic art its love of heroes and love of country—in war time and in times of peace.

The great world knew the singer and the scholar. We, his neighbors and familiars, knew the unflagging worker; the man of letters ever ready to help those of his craft who, even without warrant, claimed his sympathy and time; and ever ready to toil early and late for the good of his craft at large. We knew the devoted friend, the manly heart that took bravely the shocks of fate.

He filled with force and wit many parts, but his membership of the mystic brotherhood of bards—it is this that makes him dearest and ranks him highest. Because his voice was as the voice of the sweet-voiced pipe, and again as the voice of the trumpet, it is our duty to keep him in public remembrance, and honor, and regard.

By this meeting to-day we say to one another and to the world: here is one who spoke wisely and nobly of the poetic art; here is one whose virile lyrics and stirring ballads are ever to be cherished in the treasury of our New World song.

In this year of Lincoln's centennial, may it not be said that if for nothing else he will be remembered for his poems to and about Lincoln, and, having in mind one of his most nearly perfect poems, may we not say that, haply, by "The Hand of Lincoln" he will be led into enduring fame. Listen, again, to its noble close:

"Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from yon large hand, appears:
A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

"What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!"

We are here to-day not merely to mourn for one of whom, though it seemed to us that he died untimely, it can yet be said:

His life was generous as his life was long;
Full to the brim of friendship and of song.

A poem was contributed by Harrison S. Morris, and from William Winter's letter we quote:

Your auditors will rejoice in the assurance,—though they will not need it,—that, throughout a various and laborious career, of more than threescore years and ten, he was faithful to every duty; that he bore prosperity with meekness; that he met adversity with an undaunted and unconquerable spirit; that his devotion to good works never ceased nor faltered; that he stretched forth the hand of kindness toward struggling talent wherever it appeared; that whether in the tumult of business or the serenity of art he preserved a perfect self-possession and diffused a beneficent influence; and that his life was gentle and beautiful.

If I were speaking I should feel constrained to place a particular emphasis upon his firm, tranquil maintenance, amid all the hardships, distractions, and discouragements of the bleak and stormy period through which, side by side, we passed together, of a passionate faith in the poetic art, and of a fine, clear, exalted spirit, knowing itself ordained to the ministration of beauty, and willing

LOW JOHNSON HOLT OSBORNE MABIE GILDER CHURCH WHITING CARNEGIE SARGENT DRAKE BISPHAM

THE STAGE OF THE MEMORIAL MEETING, CARNEGIE LYCEUM, JANUARY 13, 1909

to make any and every sacrifice in the fulfilment of its sacred mission.

The time on which he entered on the vocation of Literature was savagely unpropitious. The forces surrounding the whole of his progress were those of a cruel materialism,—forces which are somewhat less obstructive now, but which are still regnant and still potentially pernicious. They could not deject his mind nor abate his ardor. He steadfastly adhered to the stately, lovely, ancient traditions of English poetry,—to the standard set by such great and various authors as Dryden and Gray, Goldsmith and Campbell, Shelley and Keats,—and he fed the flame that never can be quenched, on the altar of that divine art.

Something I would have added, as to the place and duty of the man of letters,—a place that he nobly filled; a duty that he nobly performed. Something else, I might have said of the affection that subsisted between him and me, and of the words of encouragement that we often spoke to one another: but let these lines of my own suffice to denote the truth that was known to him, and the feeling that I would gladly have uttered had I been able to join in your memorial service:

> Honor's plaudit, Friendship's vow
> Did not coldly wait till now:
>
> All my love could do to cheer
> Warmed his heart when he was here.

Mr. David Bispham sang several songs by Mr. Stedman, to the music of Dudley Buck. Colonel Wm. C. Church nobly spoke of his friend. Mr. Seth Low's address was discriminating in judgment and frank in affection, likewise that of Mr. R. U. Johnson, who also contributed a poem. Letters were read from Miss Helen Keller, Mr. W. D. Howells, Mr. Wayne MacVeagh, and others. Mr. Hamilton Wright Mabie delivered the principal address, selections from which are appended:

Mr. Stedman belongs with those who have not only enriched literature with work of quality and substance, but who have represented it in its public relations. There have been delicate and sensitive craftsmen possessed of the magic that evidences with-

out explaining itself; and there have been other craftsmen who have made the art of writing the subject of minute study, and the function of literature a matter of definition and exposition. To this class belong Emerson, Lowell, Stedman among others; writers who have given us joy in the play of the creative imagination, and revealed the place and power of literature as an expression of the human spirit. The spiritual service of the Man of Letters who has the sense of the large relations of his profession and is its ambassador, Stedman rendered with rare intelligence and devotion and with extraordinary completeness. It was, indeed, a vital part of his achievement; not so much a function as an inevitable expression of his view of life and art. A glance at his work from this point of view will bring out his manifold relations as Man of Letters to his time; and, at the same time, his vitality, his vivid sense of life in action, his gift for celebrating the heroism that in a swiftly kindled fire of emotion reveals the kinship of men in the exigencies of life. Out of this sense of concrete relations his truest songs rose, and in it his instinct for the public as well as the private service of his art has had its root. . . .

Like Cooper, Irving, and Bryant he stood before the community as an exponent and representative of a great profession. Like Bryant he was of New England descent; like Cooper and Bryant he bore the stamp of old New England education; like them, he felt a vivid interest in public affairs; in common with his three distinguished predecessors he shared the sense of the responsibility for and pride in the dignity and significance of literature as an individual achievement, and as a social force and function. . . .

Stedman was by instinct and temperament a man of the town, and we commemorate him here to-day because his work was done and his laurels were won here. If he sometimes sighed for the ample margins about the pages of the Book of Life on which some writers make their notes in the wide leisure of tranquil days, he never ceased to love the stir of life, swift and of a passionate energy, about him. He was never of those who decry the metropolis because its hands are full; he was of those who believe that some of the divinest visions come to men who deal strongly with the realities. . . .

Of that little company, eagerly struggling to keep life and art in working relations, Stedman, Aldrich, Taylor, Stoddard, O'Brien, and Winter passed from journalism to literature and from litera-

ture to journalism with small regard for the later conventions of specialization and in apparent unconsciousness that there were any hard and fast lines between two fields which become parts of one estate when a man of talent happens to be in possession. Thompson made an honorable place for himself in American sculpture; and Booth's rare genius for interpreting the tune by the thought and the thought by the tune—to recall Emerson—gave his reading of Shakespearian verse a distinction which no other actor of his time commanded; while his impersonations were invested with romantic charm, or with the dignity of fate. . . .

He returned to New York in 1864, and here he remained until his death; tireless alike in dealing with practical affairs, and in the practice of the art which was his real vocation. For the emphasis of his interest, the weight of his effort, the joy of his spirit were centered in literature rather than in business; and while his days were given to affairs, his nights were the hardest time of his work, when his vital energy was poured out with prodigal indifference to ease and health. He had that habit of persistent solitary work which is the secret of productivity, but he had also the sense of human fellowship which is the sign of the generous spirit that not only shares the fortunes of the race, but knows that art has given hostages to life which cannot be sacrified without impoverishment.

This largeness of view, this sense of the broad relations of things, and the instinct for fellowship between men of the arts gave Stedman's career its wide interests and its representative character. . . .

This large conception of criticism, backed by that familiarity with the earlier classics without which criticism is so often individual and impressionistic, saved him from academic formalism and from the hysterias of the hour. He could define with the precision of an expert the secrets of the art of Theocritus and of Tennyson; his judgment was not affected by the confusion of voices about Poe and Whitman; he did not fall a victim to the temptation to substitute fine writing for exact characterization, to touch weakness meanly or maliciously; to borrow an air of superiority from his function, or to wear the robe of his office as if it were the garment of omniscience; and he never confused frankness of opinion with that journalistic cleverness which concerns itself, not with the quality of a book, but with its availability for irony or sarcasm or ridicule or self-exploitation. He was just,

sane, and catholic. His vitality saved him from the mental and moral diseases of the time in Literature; and his deep feeling for the common fortune from the scorn which narrow professionalism feels for the things it cannot do, from the barrenness of oversophistication, and from the partial blindness of those who see art clearly but cannot feel life deeply. "We have long been busy with the critique of reason," wrote Goethe, one of the masters of the art of criticism. "I should like to see a critique of common sense. It would be a real benefit to mankind if we could convincingly prove to the ordinary intelligence how far it can go; and that is just as much as it really requires for life on this earth."

From the same broad intelligence comes another maxim which touches the secret of Stedman's criticism: "When keen perception unites itself with good will and love, it gets at the heart of men and the world; nay, it may hope to reach the highest goal of all."

No Man of Letters in this country has stood more consistently for the dignity and high traditions of his craft than he; and no man has given his work a finer flavor of scholarship, or imparted to it more generously that largeness of view and quiet adjustment to the knowledge of the time in many departments which are possible to the student alone. If he had written occasional lyrics, or those lighter essays which are sometimes produced rapidly in leisure moments, his success would have been notable; but his work has had a substance and continuity such as no other American has achieved who has suffered any division of his vital energy. He had nothing in common with the Decadents; he was a man to the very heart of him. He was free from diseased curiosity, from that pruriency which is always thinking about vice without daring to practise it, from the sentimental egotism which makes life one long suffering, and contemporary verse so often a waving of funeral plumes. Mr. Stedman faced his experiences and bore his burdens with a quiet heroism which not only inspired admiration, but touched his work with spiritual dignity. His optimism was neither easy nor shallow; it had been tested, and it rose from a deep healthfulness of soul. It was rooted in courage and manliness. There is a ring in his books which was in the man; decision of character, pluck, and *élan* are evident to all students of his style. One feels that he could have led a forlorn hope with the brilliant audacity which often makes a defeat more splendid than a victory.

When, on public occasions, he spoke for Literature, his address had notable dignity of thought and diction. His words at such moments had the weight and gravity of manner, the sense of something large and spiritual, which characterize such verse as "The Hand of Lincoln." His gift was lyrical, his inspirations were vital; it was when he touched life, not with his hand but with his heart, that his poetry gained free and spirited movement. An expert craftsman, a devout student of his art, a poet by the strong impulsion of his nature, a singer of dauntless spirit and generous vision—these are the things he would have hoped might be said in such an hour as this; and these are the things we say to-day, not only for the love we bore him, but for the truth's sake.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MAN

The description in his passport, signed May 9, 1879, by Mr. Stedman, shows him to have been "45 years of age; Height five feet five inches; Forehead medium; Eyes blue; Nose Roman; Mouth small; Chin round; Hair grizzly; Complexion fair; Face thin." His weight during his mature life was about 130, being, in 1906, "lower than ever, 121 lbs." He was therefore small of stature: Taylor once said to him, "Your slender physique puts me to shame." But many who knew him scarcely noticed that he was not tall, because his bearing and manner were such that he seemed at least of average height. "He had a dignity," wrote a friend, "that forbade any approach to familiarity. I think we were all unconscious of it, and Mr. Stedman equally so." To this impressiveness, especially when standing, was added a frequently-noted, almost indescribable upward cast or poise of the head which held one's attention from the slight lithe body. Mr. Percy MacKaye writes:

> In the shadow of our larger friend was seated a slight figure, keen-eyed and pale, but as he rose too, with that distinctive old-fashioned cut of the white beard, and greeted me, the alert uprightness of his carriage dominated the ampler bulk of his fellow, and he seemed momentarily the taller man. "Well, well, at last!" said he, with a brisk handshake, "Why hasn't this happened before? You're the fellow in all New York I've wanted most to meet, for a dog's age." It was said with such simple fellowship and sincerity, and as we sat down together (I was then twenty-eight or nine) he looked me in the face with a friendliness so sympathetic and modest, that our gulf of years was bridged with an eye-glance. I cannot well express how that meeting touched me —how it touches me still.

"His unimpaired sensibility," continues MacKaye, "lent a rare nimbus of youth to his features of fine-chiselled age. Dignity, presence, judgment, ripeness of experience—all these expressed themselves in his outward aspect, but these were inwardly kindled by the half-impatience of a militant boyishness. The *Gaudeamus igitur* of his college days had never ceased to sing in his quick glance, and he walked and moved and conversed to its hidden music."

Three things, especially, suggested in part by the portraits we have reproduced, served to make the poet's countenance impressive,—the "intaglio-face," the carefully kempt beard, and the "flashing eyes." One wrote of "his clear-cut face, fit to be carved in intaglio, on the surface of a sapphire. Stedman is like a sapphire intaglio, for his tenacity and strength is like that of the gem; you might hammer at him all day, and not hurt him, a few scintillating sparks alone would follow."

"I can still see him before me," writes Joseph Jacobs, "with his slight spare form carefully groomed and poised with a dignity which made one forget that his stature was below middle height; the keen, bright eyes that never needed glasses even at a comparatively advanced age; the well cared for, perfectly white beard and moustache; the thin and exquisitely moulded nose. The alert movements of head and figure left an impression of immense nervous energy and keen intellectual vigor. He had the delightful intonation of the best type of Yankee, in which I thought I discerned some modification of Southern accent. Certainly his manner had the rich courtesy of the best type of Southerner."

A friend in acknowledging a late photograph, wrote: "It is very, very, like, the same kind, spirited face, the keen eyes, the beautiful brow—the best of the Puritan with a dash of the Cavalier."

As to photographs, in writing to Furness in 1889, Stedman says: "Forgive this note, which doubtless will be the last of the Papers in the Case—for some time to come. You

bring it on yourself by asking what I can't refuse, a poor exchange for your own Elizabethan visage. To make it worse, 'tis indeed a counterfeit presentment: taken by one of those meretricious photographers who compel the camera to a flattering dishonesty, and taken some years ago, while I could yet say

'I have not dwindled,
Nor changed in mind, or body.'

When we meet, and you fail to recognize me, remember that I send you the only thing of this kind in my possession."

To an artist he writes:

I have been very unlucky as to presentments of my unimportant head, as they always have been counterfeit in the worst sense!

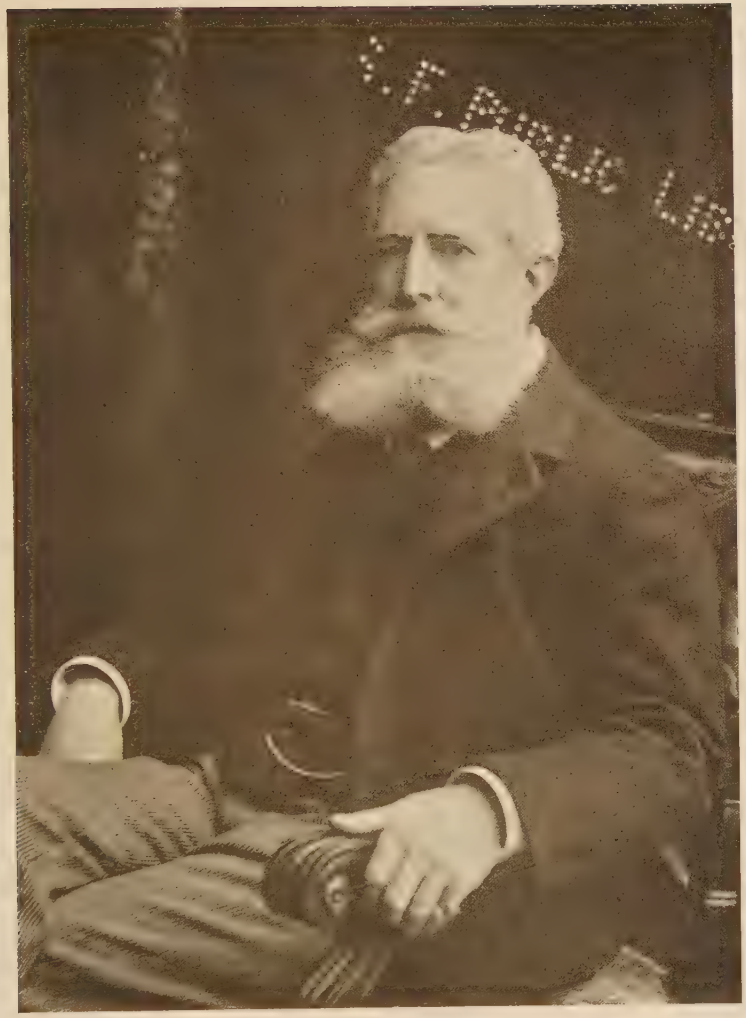
The *Mora* photo was touched up in some flattering way, and was thought to be unfaithful even when it was taken—seven years ago. Still, when I made an effort this year, and sat to Pach (for Appleton's Cyc. Biog.) the result was simply atrocious. The fact is that I have been too busy and careless to have had my picture taken often—have left that sort of thing to my brother-poets, like A—— and G——, and W——.

I have sat to George Butler for a pastel, this last Autumn. The many sittings took so much time and trouble as to "break me up" in work and pocket for the whole Winter. The result was a portrait which neither Butler nor my friends call good. 'Tis now in his studio. O'Donovan's medallion-bronze of E. C. S. is *here*—also a very wooden one by a Danish sculptor, Mr. Rohl-Smith. Both are at your service.

But I really should welcome an artist, like yourself, who says he only needs "an hour or two" to make a drawing. If you care for a single morning in my study, I shall gladly give it you week after this (i. e. from March 4th to 9th)—almost any day you will name by return mail. This week I am engaged daily.

But you will fail to catch me as I am—every painter does, so it will not be to your discredit. I am a homely, elusive, ineffective sort of person, but one with an affection for artists and art.

Later he came to choose the Alman photograph, reproduced herewith, to send to friends.



STEDMAN IN 1897

Photograph by Alman & Co., N. Y.

Concerning the Franzén portrait the poet wrote his friend, the painter:

> The man that drew me sprang from Norseland soil,
> And on the canvas I have deathless grown,
> Induced by him who genius gave and toil,
> Through his rare art to nobler make mine own.

"Did I tell you," he once asked, "that O'Donovan's bas-relief portrait of myself is a great success? It is the one by which I desire to be remembered—if at all."

Even to the last there was a touch of poetry, almost of romanticism, in the matter of dress, which in the flush of young manhood, had possibly if not "a wild civility, a winning wave deserving note," and to which Mr. Howells once alluded as his "worldly splendor in dress." Fastidiousness as regards clothes was noted in childhood, and continued, to some extent, throughout his life. It was often based upon a more subtle theory than was at first apparent, as, e. g., the careful choice from one hundred or two hundred neckties of the one style, and color, adapted to the occasion, the weather, etc., red for a dull gloomy day, for instance. Of scarf pins he also had a large assortment. Writing to an illustrator as regards the choice of a portrait he said, "If you think that boys' costume (he was reading Byron, then) an aid to early nineteenth century archæology, its former wearer cheerfully sacrifices himself in your interest. I had an idea, though, that the cravat of the older youth, and his coat, were rather stunning—yes, and just look at his first moustache! Do you wonder he married at twenty sharp?"

How often have biographers found that constant sickness and suffering was the lot of their subjects, and that it really constituted, or profoundly influenced, decisions, acts, issues, habits, and even character. Often the reiteration of the sufferings grows tedious, or the facts are so much omitted, or generalized, or blurred over, that the sources of resolves and renunciations, of desires and failures, of ways of living and upset plans, of plain endowment and as plain ill-success,

leave the picture of the life most illogical and enigmatical. Without the truth concerning this factor in Stedman's life, there would be no adequate understanding of the man. For, verily, there was scarcely a day, surely not a week nor month, into which his physical incapacity did not enter to mould, or harass, or decide. With his heroic resolve to be objective, he succeeded, as almost no other sufferer from the same disease has ever succeeded, in keeping the torment from ending in discouragement and pessimism. But it was all by means of several peculiarities of life and evasions, that his pathetic struggle against suffering was more or less continued; and these constituted the coercing reasons of almost all decisions, actions, and habits for three score years or more. As a child, and half through life, his mind was filled with horror of "consumption," and the conviction that he had this disease, and that it would kill him within a few months, or at best years.

As he did not die the hallucination became less dominating; many other diseases, or rather symptoms misnamed diseases, were more emphasized; but the conviction of consumption lived on, and became more dogmatic than ever during the last dozen years. His good physician at this time knew there was no pulmonary tuberculosis present even when the patient repeatedly asserted and vehemently claimed that a drop or two of blood-stained sputum from the throat or bronchial tubes was proof of great hemorrhage from the lungs. Several times during his life his physicians assured him his lungs were sound, but his belief remained fixed. In his last thirty years Neurasthenia had become the fashionable name for a group of symptoms the cause of which was unknown to fashionable medicine, and the patient accepted it as gladly as he did all the others,—even writing papers on the subject. The existence of heart-disease was as firmly believed in, and for the latter half of the life as continuously, as if other theories were not also trusted articles of faith. The mere list of names applied to his ailments would be appalling were it not that at present we are better

informed as to the nature of the underlying unity of the cause of most of Stedman's symptoms. Certain names recur with astonishing frequency throughout sixty or more years: such as "colds," "overwork," "nervous exhaustion," "neuralgia," "ill-health," "health bad," "fever," "worn out," "sore lungs," "run down," "broken-down," "cough," "lungs," "prostrated," "neurasthenia," etc.; but the one word, "sick" is present almost every week or day. Besides these one frequently meets in diaries and letters such designations as the following:

Scrofulosis; tuberculosis; ulcerated throat; diarrhœa; headache; intermittent neuralgia; congestive chills; chills and fever; pleurisy; cold on lungs; sore throat; diphtheria; "pleurisy of left lung;" nervous complaint; influenza; breaking down; ulcer in lungs; hurt lungs; nervous; health failing; almost cholera; the blues; lost heart; rheumatism; remittent fever; eyes sore; sick with boils; sick all over; little sleep and worn to a shadow; aging before my time; malarious fever; reduced to a skeleton; old; wasting illness; used up; insomnia; nervous disease; bilious attack; gout; cold on kidneys; indigestion; malarial fever; pain in side; wasting illness; muscular rheumatism; heart skipping its beats; lumbago; beating in the ears; brain so sore; death approaching; thin and feeble; lameness; half-paralyzed brain; sleeplessness; weak and light headed; one side numb and almost palsied; head wild; afraid of falling; neuralgic palsy; trouble in head; head bursting; cerebral difficulty; something wrong for life with brain and spine; angina pectoris; pain at base of brain; head rings; cerebro-spinal irritation; back of head all wrong; head ringing and spine burning; left side from eye to foot is wrong; slight shock of paralysis; nervous system shattered; hands and feet numb; cholera morbus; head worse; constipation; fever; fit of horrors; wretched; undone; helpless; unstrung; no head; no nerves; trembling and dizzy; one side of head comes to a deadlock every fifteen minutes; pressure on my head and twitching of the face; left side and eye semi-palsied; face and hands drawing; brain-pressure; in hiding; cerebral craze; power of action gone; growing aged, eyes grow old for first time—first pair of eyeglasses (at 54 years of age!); eyes given out; nasal hemorrhage; grippe; rheumatic gout and head trouble; My head, my head! food,

rest, sleep all seem to fail; relapses of neurasthenic troubles; went to pieces with partial heart failure; cardiac neurasthenia; sleepless; heart pounding; heart dilated; arterial system ossified; heart-failure.

The following are a few of the many illustrations in his letters, diaries, etc., of the quick causal relation between writing or reading, and suffering:

As a boy at school he had sore eyes and required eye-salve.

In college study was at the expense of his health.

At college he held the penholder as if writing a backhand.

Between each letter compelled to lie down exhausted.

Cough and pain in my side owing to application to my poem.

Writing a letter makes my heart palpitate violently. (1857)

Letter-writing is the straw that breaks my back. (1862)

In the open air even though I lived on hard bread and coffee and slept in the mud and rain, I got fat and felt gloriously. (1862)

Days spent at office-work sickness follows sickness. (1862)

With the army, health and buoyancy, no matter how hard the work, etc. (1862)

Have added five years to my physical endurance by this Summer's out-of-door life. (1864)

In vacations health comes back. (1863)

Nervous complaint follows a rainy day and writing. (1863)

If ill-weather confines me for two days I suffer enough. (1863)

Severe suffering in eyes and head from work. (1865)

Monday I suffered so much in New York I thought a week would end me; to-day on the mountain-height I am as strong as any other man. (1865)

Suffering at desk, and at once on vacation is full of physical joy, health steadily improved, is well, life has a zest, etc. Soon after arrival in New York, sick, worse, sicker. (1865)

Have to stop all my writing again. (1866)

Did editorial work at cost of eyesight and health. (1867)

Health ran down with steady labor and chest is so sore; three days of fishing brought bettered health,—brown and hearty. (1867)

At cost of eyesight and strength have done a little on Theocritus. (1867)

Eyes so sore I can hardly write. (1868)

Goes away sick and utterly worn down; in a few days, fishing, never so strong in my life; health better than ever. (1872)

Writing aggravates my wasting illness. (1873)

I pick up a little strength and if I overwork in writing a single day come down again. (1873)

As for letters I can't write them. (1873)

For years I haven't been able to sit at a desk and write, *three hours per diem* without breaking down in a fortnight. (1873)

The rough draft has nearly crazed me. (1874)

Pulls me down to write. (1874)

Writing two hours a day gets on my mind, spoils my sleep, *invariably* makes my lungs sore. (1874)

Days when I don't read or write a line all bodily trouble begins to leave me; one week on deck with no pen or paper by me and I shall be well as you. (1874)

Working at essay-writing, on vacation, unwell, lungs sore, etc. (1874)

Proofs making me sick again. (1874)

Writing has so depressed me, that, under medical advice, I stop it entirely. (1874)

Worn to a skeleton with nervous disease and can't write. (1874)

Am well and strong, have gained flesh, but as soon as I sit down for a morning's writing, the back of my head is all *wrong*, and I have to stop soon or my whole system is affected. Am better for going down town or moving about, etc. (1875)

I can't stand daily writing. (1875)

Hard week, book-keeper absent; head and side affected; a partial paralysis always accompanies this nervous exhaustion. (1876)

The doctors say I may finish my book, and then write no more for a year, or be helpless for life. (1875)

On ship slept well first time in three months. (1875)

Each voyage "set him up for years afterward," though ill at once on returning. (1875)

Reading consumes rapidly the vitality and affects the tissues of the brain. (1876)

My Stock-Exchange life must go on—the rest may be silence—the doctor says it must be. (1877)

One side of my head comes to a deadlock every 15 minutes, and stays there until I have walked awhile in the open air. (1878)

You must stop Stedman's penwork, prose or poetry, or he will

never live to Bryant's age. Forbid his doing anything out of business hours. (1878)

While in country in England, gained 5 lbs. and for first time in years had some nights of sound sleep. (1879)

Writing 10 P. M. to 1 A. M. nightly and eyes almost given out. (1880)

Last book left me with permanent trouble in head, neck, and spine, and aged me rapidly. (1880)

Don't have a *debauch* of *reading* now. It always makes you ill in a few days. (1880)

Almost dead with letters; they are breaking my heartstrings. (1885)

Nervous reaction since working on my book. (1885)

Nervous prostration from rush of work and letters. (1888)

Enforced letter-writing pulls on that strained muscle, the heart, so that I have to dictate correspondence when possible. (1890)

Have had a long and refreshing night's sleep, have written no letters—have for once had a little rest. (1890)

Have ceased to work and gone to sleep for three evenings, am better, my first comfortable day in 6 weeks. (1895)

Relapses of neurasthenic troubles, in heart and head, the moment I work. (1898)

Under medical treatment, and forbidden to read and write. (1898)

It seems beyond belief that a man of Stedman's acuteness of observation and intelligence in induction should write a thousand such things as these,—nay, more, translate them out of the realities of the most atrocious suffering, without recognizing that the mechanism of seeing (in writing and reading) was the cause of his sixty years of mental and physical anguish. A few months before Stedman's death, one eye was found to be blind, worn out, *murdered;* and the other had preserved only about one-half its visual power. He had for a few years occasionally worn a pair of glasses which were so wrong that they many times multiplied the natural injury of writing, etc.; he had also worn them so illy adjusted to the astigmatic axes of his eyes that insult was added to injury.

With the exception of small portions of time, when on vacation or resting his eyes in some way, Mr. Stedman had pitifully suffered every day of his life from what the oculists now call eyestrain. A very minor share of his symptoms were caused by other things, such as inordinate use of tea, coffee, wines, cocktails, etc., tobacco, sugars, syrups, starches.[1] But even these things were to a decided degree due to the excruciating irritations and injuries of his astigmatism. To be noted is the fact that his brokerage business, demanding little reading or writing, was a blessing, in not adding to the morbid use of the eyes. In the same way, and for the same reasons, escape from pain and injury was found in club-life, social life, etc. His diaries and letters show that he was almost permanently sick, and his consciousness was filled, maddened and crushed with the misery of it all,—that consciousness which should have been radiant with noble poetry and thought of inestimable value to the world.

In later years he was accustomed to "go into hiding," disappear for days or a week, or, at home, he was often in bed for weeks, or even months at a time, almost always whipped to torment by insomnia, always abusing with stimulants his already irritated nervous system, then seeking rest for it by sulphonal, etc. ("Heart would stop but for drugs and tonics.") Professorships repeatedly offered, official positions, powerful editorships, etc., were refused because illness sure to come would not permit. "The supreme eminence in poetry," for which he had conscious ability, could not be attempted for the same paralysant reason. The story of his sixty-year-long sufferings torments the sympathetic listener. Soon-coming Death was always expected.

And all absolutely needless, all obviable, wholly preventable, any time at least during his last forty years! It does not lessen the tragedy to know that to-day millions of others are enduring these or a similar wretchedness, each as unnecessary.

Such suffering has almost always the effect of producing

[1] Drugs too, although he avers "under the physician's advice."

great limitation of the power of working, and if not pessimism, and cynicism, then at least selfishness and subjectivity. It is a perfect testimonial to the largeness of Stedman's intellect and to the distinction of his moral nature that such results did not appear in his character or life. The pathos is the greater because in his youth he had put the old truth in these words: "What avails it to possess the key to the riddle of the Sphinx, the lore of the ancients—the knowledge of all secret and marvellous things—what avails it to be learned and competent beyond measure, if you are doomed to silence and uselessness. Just when you are all ready for your work,—just then Nature revenges herself on those who despised her. The stern Nemesis ever attendant upon a neglect of *physical education*, ill-health comes in and shakes a boding finger!"

"With all his cosmopolitan experience and training," said Jacobs, "he was truly American in spirit. He had something of the old type contempt for the newer currents of American thought and tendency. He was immensely proud of his New England ancestry and showed, in hundreds of ways, that he thought it should be the dominant note in the New America that was coming."

Of course, to a man of Stedman's inevitable cosmopolitan intelligence and imagination, all these things were added to the one thing needful, but through many-sidedness and culture the note of the "tonic" was ever present. How many things, too, he did well! Others have also combined business and literature, but in neither have they been so masterful and successful. How many and varied the borderlands he travelled and knew, how many, his notes show, those he purposed to explore. Upon *Genius* he wrote with astonishing acumen and appreciation, upon *Immortality*, *Aerial Navigation*, *Cannibalism*, *Juliet's Runaway Once More*, *What is Criticism? Keats*, *Cotton Mather*, *On New York*, *William Blake*, *Homer*, *Monopolists as Practical Reformers*, a number of essays on *Poe*, and innumerable *Reviews*, *Speeches*, *Corre-*

spondence, during and after the War, *Prefaces* and *Introductions*, *Tributes*, *Letters* to newspapers, etc.

He left incomplete novels, plays, etc., now destroyed by his command, and he planned or made notes for articles or books upon many literary subjects: "The Weird of a Neurasthenic," "A Broadway Cagliostro," "Story of a Banished Soul," "A Dying Philosopher," "The Sixth Sense," "A Night at Stratford," "My Penitential Journey," "A Story of my Own Life," "The True Social Evil," "U. S. A. the Modern Greece," "The Jews," "On Style," "The Coming Race of Americans," "Walt Whitman Again," "The Automatic Action of Emigration," "Biography of Stoddard," Revisions to date of all his books, editing of Mrs. Kinney's Autobiography, etc.

In 1894 he spoke of the great dramatic interest and coming value to art and education of the people in moving pictures. He was interested in and conversant with the genealogies of many American families. Concerning his many minds in one, Stedman—always keenly self-conscious—once said, "People think they know me—they know only the side they draw forth."

The extension of a local New Englandism into the Universal of patriotism was certain to come in a mind and heart like those of Stedman; certain, indeed, when war threatened the very existence of his country, and of true Republicanism. Moreover, in Stedman burned a genuine fervor toward what was as close to his heart, the patriotism of literature. His *Library of American Literature* (note the remarkable letter to Whitman) was inspired by this sentiment, and it breathes in much of his prose and poetry. Literature was to him a holy thing, and his supreme satisfaction was to write in obedience to strong feeling, by inspiration, one might say.

To Brander Matthews, in 1898, he wrote:

> Nor had I ever really purposed to figure as a teacher or patriot, or to live for anything but the delight of life—for me most of all to be found in the exercise of some small artistic gift which seemed

to be my one possession. And at this last stage, when I see how little of that exercise has been enjoyed by me, I look about for something that may temper my remorse. If I haven't been creative, let me see, I say, if I have done any good—have been of any use to others, to letters, to my own country and people. Well, this is taking one's self, after all, very seriously: almost laughably so, when one has laughed at prigs all his life, and in this decade of cynical frou-frouism. But, my dear fellow, just you live to be sixty-four and hamstrung, and you'll now and then take everything seriously, yourself included.

What I thank you for, then, is that your "Outline," with its lavish references to my volumes, etc., soothes me into a priggish but enchanting credulity. It has made me feel, since I read it, that I have—though quite without intent—done a little something for the record of our young literature in the Century of which more than sixty years have been mine; more, that what I have done will, through your work this year, be recalled somewhat by one group of American students at least.

I have watched with admiration your own jealous championship of our American work and workers. You will, at my age, have belonged to two "Centuries," and I am thinking, with affectionate envy, of all you are yet to accomplish for yourself and for our homeland.

And to Gilder, in 1886: "It seems to me as if my 'fountain of song' (!) had dried up. Perhaps I am only fatigued, and waiting for a shower of good luck to start it again, but it is a year since I have had the old delicious sensation of having a lyric *come to me*, from Heaven knows where, and force me to write it down. And you know I never write poetry otherwise, although I could doubtless make a finished and bloodless lyric or sonnet *per diem*."

But to one praising a minor verse: "When the *right occasion comes*, and I am coming in with a rich cargo—or think I am—I enjoy the sales with as much zest as when I brought out my first book. But when, as just now, sneaking into harbor, or up some creek, in a dug-out, I should hate to receive an Admiral's salute. I don't want that good powder wasted."

While to another he replied: "Of course it is the very best reflection of, and commentary upon, our American debasement of ideals, that has been or could be made. But the main wonder is to me that you, a writer who owns up to sixty years, and not by long practice a novelist, could write so genuine and constructive a work of fiction. The example is so encouraging that, if I live to be—say seventy-five—I may decide to surprise my fellow-authors with an American 'The Newcomes,' by way of showing the youngsters, as you have, that 'somethings can be done as well as others!' "

His friend Howells publicly and clearly epitomized the right conclusion: "What is certain is that he has come to stand for literature and to embody New York in it as no one else does. In a community which seems never to have had a conscious relation to letters, he has kept the faith with dignity and fought the fight with constant courage. Scholar and poet at once, he has spoken to his generation with authority which we can forget only in the charm which makes us forget everything else."

For the most part Stedman's attention was divided equally between literature and business. The boundary lines were kept as distinct as might be, but the slavery to money-getting *was* a slavery, and was often avoided, was always endured, with equal labor and suffering. ("I must regain freedom before attempting anything worth while in literature.") Almost every page of his correspondence bears pathetic witness:—To Howells, for instance, in 1879, he wrote: "I hope to be present on the 3rd. Want to, awfully, as I missed the other dinners. Shall read, or send, a little poemlet. To illustrate my serfdom let me say that I was invited to figure at Washington, as poet, when the Thomas Statue was 'inaugurated,' and desired to do so, but most fortunately dared not. If I had been absent from Wall Street on that day—Friday, the day of a great crash here—I should have been ruined, declared a bankrupt, and have ruined my clients besides!"

Replying to a correspondent in reference to the English Subscriptions to the Keats-Shelley fund, Stedman wrote: "The sturdy English independence is something one has to admire. If a well-known person can only afford to subscribe half a guinea, he does it like a man, finely indifferent to thoughtless criticism."

In 1891, an old friend wrote Stedman:

You make a fellow feel like doing, when with you, the best he can in response to the entertainment which you give in deed and word, and it rather saddens an old man like me to know that he can't kick up his heels and do and say somethings in honest return.

Among other things for which I admire you is your faculty for business and for things higher than business. I ran away from your office on Broadway when the telegraph wires were clicking ups and downs in stocks and bonds. I got away with highest respect for the coolness with which you listened to announcements alternately exalting and depressing. As for me, such things would have killed me dead long before the time when I first saw you: and what a pity to me that would have been!

But when I saw you at the Century Club on Sunday, you looked to me at your best, and I thought that if Stedman may possibly be not as successful a moneymaker as Rogers, I'll be blamed my buttons if he ain't a better poet and a more lovable friend and companion. . . . I wish I could see you as rich a banker as you are a true poet. Please write before I die, other things, many other things, like *Alectryôn*.

"I wish I could meet you some time," wrote Howells, "and have a long talk about literature, and about the economic phases which now seem to me so important. I fancy we might find ourselves on common ground, where we now appear to differ. At any rate you would not find me wanting in honor for the hand that has kept the Lamp alight and aloft above all the dust and din of commerce these many years."

His friendliness, his offices of Critic and Friend of Poets, also increased the burden of his work, and moreover directly

and grievously brought him the physical suffering of ill-health. His long lists of letters to be answered were always carried with him, and tormenting him. For, as Higginson said to him, "you are one of the few who still put thought into what our grandmothers called 'epistolary correspondence.' " To illustrate:

To ———

February 27, 1900.

You are very kind to write me, and I wish to say at once that I often have thought of you since you last called. You then laid bare your heart to some extent. I realized how you had suffered, and what sorrows still shaded your daily thought and walk, and you have had my fullest sympathy and kindest hopes that fair skies might yet be beaming for you behind the clouds. Most men go through an "ordeal by fire" at some epoch of their lives. If they survive, it renders them impervious to ordinary troubles thereafter.

You ask me if a man of forty-three should give up the fight! My dear fellow, if I were your age only, and in working condition, I would, with anything like our knowledge of life, resolve to "shake the pillars of the temple." At my age, one has been old, and young again, several times. Life is divided into many rounds of Summer and Winter, and the seasons between. No man really *knows* women, for instance, until past your age. Both you and I have had our successes and failures. There is no *unconquerable* knock-down except that of absolute and lasting shame, and that of physical disability. *I* am suffering the latter, and I fear permanently, yet I have in a way, to begin life again at sixty-six! Why, you have still what seems to *me*, Youth. Give up? *Never!* Think more carefully than formerly *of what it is best to undertake.* You are a natural writer, and writing is at least a "good crutch," and may be a pair of legs. I believe you will hit something, anyhow, and find new friends, new love, new happiness.

I am ill, and overwhelmed with letters, and with work, for which I am unequal, but I stop to tell you, thus, to keep your heart green. *Forget your married life, for a time.* Find a woman, if possible with resources, to love you and aid you in a new future. Again, I say, I only wish I had your age and its chances.

To Miss ———

December 25, 1882.

In your letter you are a very eccentric lady, yet I doubt no that you are as staid as other people in your actual personality.

Do I love Christ? I love my work, and we are told that *laborare est orare*. I don't love to have to write letters that interfere with my pressing duties.

I have not classed Mrs. Moulton among "elder poets" but distinctly, among the "successors" to the elder poets. Usually I prefer, of course, to keep the "infinitive and its sign" as close as lovers' hands in a sleigh-ride, but there *are* cases when the reins have to be handled—even from a sleigh. Your criticism as to the slip on page 547, line 10, is excellent and well founded, and I heartily thank you for it. I cannot find the "infinitive" on page 543, 6th line from the last. Do you mean "was long retarded"—that is inelegant, but is the imperfect passive indicative—not "infinitive." I will remark that, when I put the adverb in its right place, the editors or proof-readers often transpose the words, splitting up the verb.

The little poem is touching—I had already seen it. Wish you a Merrie Christmas.

Don't you wish that postage was $1. the letter? I do.

At work, whether literary or commercial, it was certain that Stedman should go into the matter thoroughly, and in detail. There was a certain businesslike worldly wisdom in command, in his book-making, and poetry-writing, as well as in stock-brokerage. The study of the most minute details as to the making of every book is astonishing. In page after page are set forth, instructions to publishers, and to the Superintendent of the Printing Office, as to all details concerning each "sort" of type to be used, size of page, punctuation, spacing, side-notes, running heads, paper, press-work, binding, indexes, spelling, etc. He had a right to dictate, not only by reason of his perfect taste, but also because he had personally as editor, learned all the details of the business, even to typesetting. "I am sure you will think the cover, of *Mater Coronata*, a beauty, for I designed it myself with the aid of the medal;" and an expert said, "You cer-

tainly know how to make a book attractive to the heart of the Bibliophile." Once in a speech, he said:

You printers in these days of fast printing are apt to make the ink pale. Lately I had to bring out a book at the Riverside Press, and I told Mr. Houghton that I should like to combine English and American ideas, as our friends at Boston did in the yacht Puritan. I observe that all English books open well. They are easily read. They are easy to hold in the hand. All English cloth-bound books fall to pieces early, because they are intended to be bound again. American books are well stitched; they hold together, but it is almost impossible to hold them open. I said to Mr. Houghton, let us get out this book with a flat back so that it will open loosely and easily; stitch it strong with thread or wire so it will not fall to pieces, and he brought out the book, which is a crown octavo. You can open it as easily as you can a prayer-book that Dr. Paxton has used for three or four years, and it is perfectly firm. I commend it to you. Tell the binders to make books with flat backs and have them thoroughly stitched. When I came up here "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse" Carleton promised to make my speech, and while "Betsy and I" are here I should like to have somebody else who writes "hog-wash" speak for the authors as well as myself.

Prior to all this were still more explicit plans, notes, and all sorts of memoranda for his own guidance as author. Each sentence had a definite purpose in the general architecture and scheme of the chapter, and of the book. So that he was asked: "How do you manage to produce the results of scientific treatment without revealing any of the mechanism of the method? Most of us can't possibly ride a theory to its finish without having it so bare-boned that every rib is visible."

"A man dictates his fate or illustrates it, by the opinion he has of woman," was Stedman's version of an old truth. One of the most perfect essays ever written by Stedman was that on Mrs. Browning, and he said it was his tribute to Woman. "If anything has made my life cheerful it has been

the love of kindly and lovable women." "I never in my life have permitted a woman's letter to remain unanswered."

Woman's sphere, he held, was social, and with all his so-called "paganism," he was ever praiseful of the gentlewoman, who should "make men strong and fill the home with sunshine." Although he was himself not a church-goer, he, as a respecter of tradition, thought women should be religious. "Be as unconventional as you please in private, but in public never." "I hate a disputacious woman," he once snapped out. He cared less for literary women than for matrimonial women, and said, "If I were King I'd marry them all off, every one;" and it is reported that he jokingly said, "A woman would better marry and be beaten, than not to marry." "Where draw the line?" he was asked by a lady: "The clothes-line," was flashed back.

These excerpts from letters are suggestive:

Perhaps by this time you have found some new hold upon life and work. I hope so. At all events you long since attained womanhood—and in this era my tenderest sympathies are not so much for those of your sex who fail of literary use and fame, as for those who have not had the sacred right of every woman: wifehood and motherhood. And there are thousands of them, changing from beauty to forlornness, withering in soul, mind and body.

Upon my telling Noah Brooks that I realized my age, now that young girls let me kiss them—he said: Is that all, my boy? When you are as old as I am, you will find the evidence more pitiful. Bless your soul, *they* kiss *me!*

You certainly have caught me very badly. That was a serious break I made, *in re* Youth and Beauty, and not often have you found me so ungallant or so blunderingly a Milesian—and I deserve all your gentle and mirthful shafts of satire!

To tell the exact truth. Youth that is *too* youthful—that hasn't the beauty of experience and soul and intellectual expression, doesn't attract me very much. Perhaps I am not yet *quite* old enough? At the present date I prefer your kind to the *kinder.* (That's a German pun.)

Few women—except the wives of such men as Depew, Choate, etc.,—understand the incessant clock-work inside the lives of "men of affairs." No *mere* writer or artist can allow for it. And you know I resorted to "affairs" to preserve my liberty, otherwise, to have a certain independence of taskmasters, to escape a certain kind of thraldom which many of the noblest souls are forced to endure. Hence, I have a constant number of works and duties and problems in hand, with which I really burthen my idealist friends—but which prevent me from doing the things I most wish to do as rapidly as I desire. But in the end these things rarely go unaccomplished. I am aware that this same stress of material works causes me often to be misunderstood by those I love most dearly. Of all our set I have the least *time* and use (and by self-discipline the least inclination) for secret or open dislikes, enmities,—for verbal *expression* of my affection and sentiment. I can only afford to *act*, and act as wisely and straightforwardly as possible for those under my roof or cherished in my heart. I cannot and will not take life too "seriously" at present. You, who read human lives so marvellously well, should read me aright. My very nonsense and chatter often are a relief to an inward ten-ton weight of perplexity and trouble. Thus I escape *doing* "foolish things," if I rarely *say* "a wise one"—and reverse Charles Second's habit.

You will get, my dear friend, the right key to my unimportant nature, when you comprehend after all that it is *simple*—that my nature is, on the whole, loyal and practical; that I want to steer my ship—its crew of kindred and friends like an honest captain and good helmsman; that I have few hidden or ulterior ends, and that—while in youth hasty and captious—I have learned from self-experience and a close knowledge of the sensitive artistic temperament, with whose possessors I have the tenderest inborn sympathy, *forbearance*. I have learned to take each man in "his humor"—to accept my friends *as they are*—even to allow for their failure to understand me as I here have explained myself.

You women don't know how it eats one's heart out—to superadd love-writing upon bread-writing, upon a man's day's-work.

Your new resolve to be good and bear with your friends' faults, and even to allow for them, and to *take them as God made them*, is all you need to form an aureole around your fine-shaped head.

Can you stick to it? *Nous verrons.* Meanwhile, it is good to have you and M—— companions again. There are not many left on Time's raft. The sea will soon swallow us all.

In reply to your courteous letter, asking my opinion of the movement for Woman Suffrage, I will say,

1. That, having always been something of a radical, I have long hoped that Woman Suffrage might receive a fair test in Massachusetts, or in some other one of the older States.

2. That I do not think the men are in the way, and responsible for the main opposition to it. I once heard Frederick Douglass say to Miss Susan B. Anthony that, whenever the majority of women should wish to vote, men would speedily assent to their so doing,—and I believe he was right. The reason women are not voters is because they, as a class, do not wish to vote.

The "Women's Calendar" is calculated to upset ancient traditions as to who are the true lords and masters. The time foretokened in the last scene of Tennyson's "The Princess" has surely arrived. Woman is now the intellectual peer of man: she seems to have made up, in spite of Stuart Mill, for her 4000 years of "Subjection," almost in a decade. She certainly "knows her rights, and knowing dares maintain." We men, we fallen tyrants, must throw ourselves on your magnanimity—and trust that you will not take the revenge which is plainly within your power! What plea I can enter for myself I don't know—unless it be to let my article on Mrs. Browning count in my favor. It was my sincere tribute to your sex, written before the days when women—in addition to the "hearts" which they always held—had most of the "clubs" also, and stood to win with either suit as trumps.

Dear "Lady Mary":

My *devoirs* are laid so gently and seductively, and withal so firmly, upon me, that I have no wish nor power to resist. My vows shall be all foresworn, and I shall enter your enchanted castle at 5 P. M., or thereabout, on Saturday.

Thackeray had me in mind,—in his prophetic mind,—when he sang—

"Thus, always it was ruled,
And when a woman smiled
The strong man was a child,
The sage a noodle.

Alcides was befooled,
And silly Samson shorn,
Long, long ere you were born,
Poor Yankee Doodle!"

But 'tis *you* who clip *my* locks, Delilah Anna, and not your fair and famous Bostoneses—potent though I know they be. You see I am still

"Yours to command,"
SAMSON ALCIDES DOODLE STEDMAN.

You are right. I have read, finishing this evening, the Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff.

It is wonderful. It was reserved for that poor proud girl to reveal to us that the human being can be studied by *inversion* as broadly and profoundly as by the method of the inclusive, outlooking, Shakespeares and Balzacs. And the Gods were just, after all. Her Journal *was* saved, and her life has become the knowledge, and enthralled the wonder and pity, of a million readers, of all nations. She will not "wholly die." I trust her fair spirit has knowledge of all this. If not, the whole system of the universe is *foul play*.

See! how much I desire to stand well with my fairest and brightest Mentor—in fact, my Ornamentor.

Here are some authorities for those phrases which struck you as sounding oddly. Not that I've much respect for authorities, but I take kindly to idioms long current with the English bench, bar, pulpit, etc. My early legal and Biblical readings possibly have left too strong an influence on my style.

Some afternoon I shall drop in for "a dish of tea"—which, by the way, was of old pronounced *tay* in England:

"Here thou, great Anne! whom three realms *obey*,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes *tea*."

It is a pure, but notable coincidence, that the lines I cite from Pope contain your name, with the proper adjective prefixed!

I suppose the most difficult sale in the world to make, except that of a Connecticut hilltop farm, is an "old master" or a copy of one! No one whom I know buys "sich." Yet it is all a matter

of fashion. The *Museum* laid in a lot of 'em, once, and has been trying to hide most of them ever since, so I fear you can't sell your Nymphs there. If the Sirens and the Oceanides are very nude and very tempting, you might try Stokes, at the Murderer's Den.

Really, your best chance will be with some hotel or restaurant.

P. S. Try Dr. Parkhurst.

2nd P. S. They might do for altar-pieces in Talmadge's new Tabernacle.

P. S. No. 3—As they are semi-marines, try one of the Jew hotels at Long Branch or Coney Island.

(*I* have several Sirens on my hand just now, already.)

(Note on margin in lead pencil: "It is as hard to get rid of an old Master as an old Mistress!")

To Miss ———

February 6, 1884.

I suppose that most men rarely grow old enough to forget an hour's ride with a couple of interesting young ladies,—and if those young ladies exhibit the strange anomaly of being "daft" on Kant and Hegel, and withal of not having read Howell's last novel, the impression they will leave on any man's mind is quite indelible. Indeed, I remember you,—though I am becoming an "old moustache,"—perfectly well, and often have spoken of you to my wife, and cited you to others as a pair of representative Summer-School-girls! But which of you was Miss ———, and which the other, I certainly cannot now upon my honor affirm. . . . I do remember, however, that with the tact of your youth and sex, you flattered me by asking advice as to your future studies; that I felt profoundly embarrassed by such a request from maidens fair who had so far outstripped me in divine Philosophy; but that I did venture, with much humility and some amusement, to suggest that you two,—having mastered the dead metaphysicians,—should now begin to study living men. This it was perfectly evident you would do, I confess, without any advice,—and there was no fear that girls so bright and winning would lack for opportunity! Still, I am pleased to learn that your friend has proceeded from the abstract to the concrete; and I am even more pleased that you have transferred your devotion from philosophy to art,—and thus have become, by the consensus of all the fine arts,

my younger *comrade*. For my life, too, is pledged to Art—not that I would undervalue the *training* which metaphysics give the brain and soul,—but that it is all it can do for one who has the artistic instinct. And I think a day of *creative* labor, of the creation of *beauty*, worth a month of metaphysical speculation. Besides, how much happier the woman-artist than the woman-philosopher! Whether poet or painter, you will not regret leaving the forum for Arcady.

"Old boys at play,"—underneath the playing not a little seriousness—is instanced in a bit of fun, "From the *Tribune* of January 29, 1907:

AS TO WHITEWASH

"How can any one think that the Salome of Sudermann is shocking? . . . When for the first time she dances before men her one motive, her one desire, is to please Herod and his guests by doing her prettiest. Like most girls, she has eyes for men. . . . She doesn't believe that John will lose his head. Her only purpose is to make him realize her power—to be able to save the man who has scorned her. . . . She wishes to learn. . . ." [*Julia Marlowe.*]

Mr. Sothern thinks that Miss Marlowe's dance, although a little middle-aged will do wonders in the cause of morality. . . . One serious word may not be altogether inappropriate. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe are elderly performers. They have both long since arrived at the age of discretion. They know perfectly well the value of all that they do and say on the stage. They know that the play of "John the Baptist" depends on a lascivious dance. They know that it is an immoral play, despite its pretence of religious import. Their pretence on the subject is humbug. . . .

I

Gracious Julia, weary nations
  Long have waited for the day
When from tarnished reputations
  All the "tar" should drop away:
Now at last it comes, in glory,
  Proudly ushered in by you,
With the wrecks of ancient story
  All made over, "good as new."

II

Hitherto considered grim and
Subject only for police,
Sweet Salomé, full of whim and
Girlish, gay, demure caprice,
Rectified by you, emerges
White as Mary's little lamb,
And, made cleanly by your purge, is
Blameless as the peaceful clam.

III

Never since Eve ate the apple
Was there such a need abroad
For a valiant mind to grapple
With the immemorial fraud—
Fraud that smirches fair Brinvilliers,
And withholds the verdant bays
That should otherwise be still yours,
Chaste and virtuous Katy Hayes!

IV

Falter not in your grand mission!
Gracious Julia, O, be strong!
Hauling up from their perdition
Saintly souls who've suffered long:—
Good old Cenci, tender father,
Much inclined to playful whim,
And great Valentian, rather
Prone to jokes mistelling him.

V

Messaline and blithe Lucrezia,
Whom so much we ought to rue,—
Beauties of the ancient Geisha,—
And old Torquemada, too;
Jezebel and poor Uriah's
Pretty wife—they're all your own,
And, to surfeit your desires,
There's the Queen of Naples, Joan.

VI

But, O, Julia, gracious Julia!
Please consider for a while
That your sentiments peculiar
Cause your cynic friend to smile:
And, although you are "a corker,"
With your many lovely lures,
He must gently murmur "Walker!"
When he hears such talk as yours.

W. W.

Stanza composed solely for W. W.'s private delectation,—the composer having just lit upon the "Whitewash" ballad in a file of *Tribunes* accumulated during his temporary attack of pink-eye.

E. C. S.

TO W. W.

ANENT REDEEMING GRACE

Call us "grim," "immoral," "naughty,"
Say it is decadent art,—
But,—*elderly!* Great Herod! Ought he
Thus to pierce the Thespian heart?
They who dance must pay the fiddle
(Or, at least, the Syrian lute),
But, Oh, Willie! that word "middle-
Aged" proves you *just a brute!!*

EDWARD AND JULIA.

Oh! I have a confession to make. I remember once laughing at you for your extravagant (as I thought) laudation of Modjeska. Now I have seen and admired that beautiful lady and actress on the stage—and often have met her at receptions, etc.

But last night she came to our house, from a dinner-party, *radiant*—a seeming goddess in a superb white and crimson low-necked, sleeveless, dress—looked, moved, talked, like Juno, Venus, and Diana, all in one. *I give in.* We all did. There is but one such woman.

I'll go anywhere to see *you*, or to please you, except as a show to a lot of charming and witty girls. Bless you, 'tis only an *aggrava-*

tion, now, for me to meet youth and beauty! I see that my beard is white—and *they* see it—and yet I don't *feel* it. I haven't a "realizing sense" of it, and why should I voluntarily incur the woes of Tantalus? The most appalling and absurd scrape I ever got into was when Rose Cleveland beguiled me to tea at Mrs. Reed's finishing-school. Then she took me into the big hall with its waxed floor. There were fifty full-grown girls, doubtless all thinking me an old prig. However, I sat down between the prettiest two—one in pink, one in blue—and we soon were flirting at a great rate. Mark you! that horrid Mrs. Reed switched me up on the platform, and then presented all those fifty girls to me—till I felt like an octogenarian muff and a figure-head. They hated me, I know, and I wanted to *hug them* and talk nonsense to them. I am not a bit of a show, and Mrs. Stedman justly says that I have no dignity. Girls are good to kiss—not to teach. I would rather have been Anacreon than Solon!

A vision of girlish loveliness, in the frame of our hall curtains, delighted a dozen guests at our last night's "Sunday Evening," and as for me—it brought back a face I loved thirty years ago (a young man's face) so vividly, eyes, smile, and all, that I cried out at once—"There stands Will Shurtleff's daughter!" I have been bemoaning for years, of late, the decline of the fresh, dewy beauty which our schoolmates (the girls) possessed in those old times; but your Mabel disproved my belief—it is only the town girls that are inferior—the Connecticut and Massachusetts girls are of the same old peach-blossom type. I loved your daughter at sight, for your sake and her own; for a moment I was young again; the next moment, and I saw that my Arthur—who wouldn't take his eyes from her—was considerably younger than you and I are.

A charming girl was sure to charm him; he loved to have them about him, and if one wrote him a letter such as this, it brought the gay young gallant, no matter how old he was, at once to her feet:

My dear Mr. Stedman,—

For a long time I have been wondering to whom you wrote,—

> "Prithee tell me Dimple chin
> At what age does love begin?"

Papa can't tell me so I'm writing you.

You see, as Mr. Howells said the other day, my real name is Elizabeth Holden Webb, but my true name is Dotty Dimple, therefore I am jealous of all other Dimples though I long ago outgrew mine!

Is it perhaps Miss Laura Dimple Chin?

You have the Dervish-anointed eye, as you once said to Papa, so you will know that I am writing hoping to receive an autograph letter from you. Papa has offered me one of your letters to him, but I want one of my very own to be treasured with some others. If my hopes are realized the proudest and happiest girl in Nantucket, or anywhere else, will be

Very truly yours,
DOTTY DIMPLE ELIZABETH HOLDEN WEBB.

THE WESTMINSTER, March 8, 1902.

MY DEAR DOTTY DIMPLE:

The other day when I caught you at the Authors Club, I saw at once that, although you had grown "to man's estate," [1] Time would never be able to fill up one or two of those delectable depressions made by Cupid's finger when he stood as godfather and gave you your pet-name.

This morning I arose resolved that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, *nor any other creature*, should hinder me longer from transcribing "Toujours Amour" for you, and from replying to your prettiest of letters with mine own hand.

To whom was the vagrom poemlet addressed?

Confidentially, my fair Dot, I will tell you.

The first division was written for you—when you should come to Earth from your celestial kindergarten and arrive at your third (mortal) year.

The second division was prophetically written to its writer—now the survivor of an intervening Thirty Years' War. And, if I were to see much of the heroine of the first division, doubtless I would find it harder than ever to "foretoken," etc., etc.

Your earthly father has sent me a very beautiful and compensa-

[1] Mr. Burton, comedian, spoke of a possible Miss Toodle's growing "to man's estate"—by which he must have meant that she might be part of the personal estate of some man? [E. C. S.]

tory letter, which shall stay by me and apart from my ordinary files, and go down to my descendants and perpetuate the loving alliance of the Webb and Stedman clans.

Tell him that I am most deeply gratified, and that for an evening it made me almost young again. Yes, and I will send him herewith a review by Mr. Whiting which I have clipped from the Springfield *Republican*. It pleases me, because it does justice to some of your father's pieces which I considerately left for others to applaud. Your father—a *real* poet—has now the leisure, health, and quiet "means," that are denied to me at present. You, and his fame, and his reviewers, must induce him to avail himself of this advantage and "to sing us some more of those songs which he knows how to sing so well." And as for you and me—*dum vivimus amabimus!* Shall we not? So it seems to

Your admiring Grizzled-Face,
EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

To the fair Elizabeth *Holden* Webb.

Other illustrative letters are these:

To Miss ———

May 18, 1899.

Even before I received your sweet messages by "Uncle John," I wished to write you; but was waiting to learn something more of the alliance you are about to make—although your note to Laura had impressed me by its evidence that you were no longer a "girl." (Mind, I don't under-value girls—I like little girls and large ones in proportion!) No longer merely lovely and light-hearted, but a soulful young woman, judging for yourself and knowing extremely well what you are about.

For I confess that it seems but last month that you were here, and since your father died, and since you were a schoolmate of our little Laura. So I was rather dazed by your rapid rush into the immediate precincts of matrimony. You have always been your own mistress—to an extent so unusual that I might well have doubts whether your impulses this time had not got the better of your foresight—and I naturally waited to learn something of your choice and what it all meant for your future!

Well, I now appreciate just what you have done—in fact, I have known of ———'s standing and qualities without realizing

that he was the one who had made another great success in winning the heart and hand of an American Juliet-Portia—for that is the combination which you seem to be. It is not often given to a maid to show the fire of the one and the judgment of the other!

My dear, I am old—and have lived and loved, and suffered, and joyed, and have seen many others with their experiments and experiences. Knowing something of you, I verily believe, I am content with what you have done. Your nature would not now be satisfied with the companionship of one of our young fellows; you need a *man*—not merely as a master, for you are any man's equal in sovereignty and world-experience; but it must be a mature, strong, able, manly husband—and one honored by all—who can be your *companion*, who can win and *hold* your heart and hand. For one, I think all marriages should be so arranged—and Shakespeare was of the same opinion. Again, a man will *always idolize his younger wife*.

I was afraid you might choose some boy, some pleasure-lover, some money-bag, or that some titled feather-brain might allure you. You have done just right—I congratulate you, and I envy the man whom you are to wed. They tell me ——— was liked by your father as he well might be. God bless you and make your life ideal. I admired your pretty mother and you know the love between your father and me was "passing the love of woman," so I am still more content. They have forbidden me to write at all, as I am in the hospital with a cardiac trouble, but I have disobeyed in order to tell you that I am affectionately yours. . . .

To Miss Sara Huntington Perkins.

May 24, 1902.

You see, at once, that I feel perfectly at liberty to call you so,—for am I not still a Norwich Boy, though now a very old one? And are you not the "dear Miss Perkins" of everybody who claims to be "anybody" in rare old Norwich Town?—Well, I have been for sometime expecting to write you, and to thank you for having, though unwittingly, made me the possessor of the one thing in my study that reminds me *daily* of the gentle folk among whom my youth was passed. It has found an abiding-place on the cord that reaches from the ceiling to my study-light. There it hangs, fastened by a silken braid and tassels, and it is—thy dear little *yellow* thread and needle bag, which was one of those you made for

that poetic maiden called Margaret Fuller. *She* has gone across the seas,—our house is much the duller for her absence. But I simply *made* her give me that yellow sac, which certainly came from "Quality Street," and the deft hands of one of its truest gentlewomen! And now, you see, I am confessing my offense, and sending you this note, and a little book besides, to obtain your forgiveness. In truth, I would have done this earlier, but I have waited to procure the little book which Margaret assured me was dear to your heart—the copy of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" which goes to you by mail, and which should reach you the day after you receive these lines. *If it don't travel safely*, I beg you to let me know, and I shall send another. And meanwhile, will you not think of me, my dear Miss Perkins, as very faithfully yours. . . .

To ———

Yes, 'tis Leap year, and all my old sweethearts are a-writing me. Me—who have long been dead, if you only knew it, leaving a psycho-galvanized Eidolon moving around here in my stead! Well, *you* are the earliest, latest, always most loyal of my woman-friends, and of course I have treated you the most shamefully of all. That is, my Eidolon has, for *I* have been dead these ten years.

What am I doing, or what is *It* doing? Why, like all *Reduced Gentlefolk*, grinding in the mills. It seems I must go to Washington this week, on the copyright question. I have not been to Washington for thirteen years, nor farther than to *Portsmouth* for five years; and we are to let Kelp Rock this Summer, and stay hereabout, to supervise my (mine and Miss Hutchinson's) 10-volume "Library of American Literature," at last going to press. Of late when I write a literary brother or sister, I save work by enclosing the circular you will find herein. I must say a word, due to *you*, as to my *continued* non-enjoyment—i. e. *non-availment*—of my right to your friendship and communion. The trouble with Tourgenieff's "Spring-Floods," Daudet's "Sappho," and such dreadfully tragic books of blundering ruin is that they are so *true*. I was made for *freedom*, variety, travel, friendship, adventure, love. The mistakes and trials of my own youth, . . . have reduced me to a monotonous, routinish, prosaic, Philistine, domestic, *reclusive* Drudge. I have love, honor, position, friends, and

not an hour to spare for the proud joyous utilization of them. I *want* to write a little poetry before the end, but for ten years have written and edited prose, and now only have a poem about once a year. Your songs, like mine, "*come*" of their own accord, so you know what my confession means. For the last year, enforced letter-writing has exhausted the time and thought that might have been worth something.

To ———

October 30, 1900.

By what fine instinct did you know that your graybeard friend had a little set-back, and was a rather weary "shut-in," when your warm heart moved you to send me—in their fresh richness—this superb Sisterhood of the flower that takes its name from you? The roses could not have reached me at a better moment. I was loving you even more than usual, for the words you sent me on my birthday, and had said that my first note—now that my hand was less lame—should be to you,—and then these beauties, with their glory of color and verdure and perfume, quickly made that pledge "a foregone conclusion." In very truth, my girl, you are one over a hundred, when I look about among the many modern maidens whom I chance to know. Few of them have your endearing traits, your tender womanhood, your modesty—that would of itself prevent me from saying all I feel about your *character;* and fewer still have your sweet unselfishness and sympathy.—In some way, I am certain, Life will bring you your reward. Pinkney sang of one like you: "Affections are as thoughts to her;" and of her words he sang:

"The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose."

It has been a satisfaction to me that you and Laura are so much to each other, for there is no other of her mates with whom I am so content to have her intimate. I hope your friendship will always be the same, and that you may always find her constant, and worthy of all you are to her. And as for me, my dear Rose, you have had the grace to make me realize again how wise Emerson was when he bade those in the afternoon of life not to fear to "re-

cruit their friendships" from the ranks of the young, as the ranks of their early friends grow thinner.—Don't resist any impulse to visit us at any time, that may seize you, for you will always gladden our eyes.

To Mrs. Louise C. Moulton.

August 17, 1875.

To receive, within one envelope, letters from Kate Field, Laura Bullard, and yourself, makes me feel like Paris on Ida when the three goddesses visited him. As for your respective titles,—which is Hebê, which Aphroditê, which Athenê,—pray settle it among yourselves. By the way, if Paris had had the worldly wisdom to make that answer, he would have prevented the siege of Troy. But then, he wouldn't have had Helen, and we shouldn't have Homer. So all's well that ends well. . . .

I see you are still in the downs. Pray remember the motto on Hazlitt's sun-dial—on which I must write a song for your benefit, *Horas non numero nisi serenas*—"I count only the hours that are serene."

"Only the sunny hours
  Are welcomed here!"
My heart its transient woe
  Remembers not;
The ills of long-ago
  Are half-forgot;
But Childhood's round of bliss,
  Youth's tender spell,
Hope's whisper, Love's first kiss,—
  Still cherished well!

By the way, I like your religious poetry, of which I saw another specimen lately, from the *Christian Union*.

Thank L. C. B. for the enclosed letter and say to her that I was driven down here by a slight pull-back and shall not return to town till September 1. Have just corrected my last proof-sheet, and enclose you Osgood's circular—(not yet to be issued). Have spent my *last cent* of *saved moneys*, and am borrowing; and this Fall am to begin life again, and over forty! Here's *practical* trouble for you, but if I can have my health, I don't propose to worry.

Do some humorous writing. Take refuge in *art and work*. . . . I suppose you were looking with us at the full moon last night,—and were our unseen *vis-à-vis*.

Here is an exquisite tribute to two dear friends; it was written September 18, 1907:

A writer, Edwin Wiley, in the *Pathfinder*, August 23, 1907, says of the union between William Blake and his wife, Catherine Boucher, that it "was so perfect that barring Brownings, the Hawthornes and perhaps the Rossettis there has been nothing to equal it." But right here, in the ancient part of New York, the interblending and mutual comprehension of Richard and Elizabeth Stoddard, grown curiously stronger through a married term longer than that of any of the four couples named, surpassed that of either of the others. For even Browning and his wife differed in taste, and Mrs. Blake, a beautiful but ignorant girl, never could have entered into the imaginings of her husband who was artist, seer and poet. Her motto must have been "I cannot understand, I love." But the Stoddards were welded iron in their sensitiveness, their pride, their stoicism, their views of life, of art, of the vital and essential in books. Both were Puritan-pagan. They disdained concession, allurement, self-deception. They were unlike—yet both with passion for beauty, color,—she more for nature and personality; he more for art, the written text, the world as a whole. Their loves and hates were, without exception, the same—right or wrong, and often although they were wrong, each espoused the other's cause, and favoritisms. Their sorrows were few, but so intense as to cloud the lives of both—rather the one life of the twain. As they lived together—so they died, within the same year. Each could say of the other: "I do not love Heathcliff; I *am* Heathcliff."

Mrs. Stoddard herself wrote Stedman:

I am struck by one feature in your biographical notices of authors —you some way always bring in the *woman* influence. You have done it very delicately and sweetly in Warner's case, and now should you ever write up Dick I give you carte blanche concerning me. Considering the heavy trials of most writers—their battle for a mere foothold upon the earth—I think their relations with

women is most important, and should be understood. It is only a fine, great, good, and terrible nature that is moved, governed, and dependent upon a woman. Think of me and of Dick—our faults, weakness, suffering, poverty, *ungovernableness* and yet the tie between us could never be broken—it is that of intellectual sympathy and understanding—with a subtle relation of *physical forces*. I fear I am stupid. I know I am hot—and it is certain I am in a hurry.

The test of the character of a good man is his love for his Mother. In Stedman's life, the fervor of his own love for his Mother was equalled only by his poignant hunger for affection from her. His longest and best letters were to her, his deepest desire to be with her. His better intellect was always setting her right, his call to her to come was unanswered, yet the orphaned heart was superbly loyal. He writes her that she was "unkind to reproach him for the lack of an education which she neglected to superintend," but he did not dream of reproaching her. We have inserted many letters to his Mother illustrating all this. Another love as strong and as enduring was to his always-remembered brother Charles, of whom he wrote at the hour of his death in 1863:

What accumulating ills such prolonged family dismemberments involve! And the *equal chances* of Providence are sadly illustrated in the fact that the one who has drunken this last bitter cup, was the noblest, the most heroic, the most self-sacrificing, the longest suffering, the purest and truest, of us all. His young life was one series of joys denied, hopes deferred, rights withheld. A man of delicate tastes—he passed years amongst the most coarse and brutal associations; a man of deep tenderness and gentle yearnings—he had no one to love and caress him; endowed with all capabilities of enjoying, and rendering joyful, a home—he lived homeless and with uncongenial strangers; and through all, he was a gentleman and noble to the last. So schooled was he to every form of mishap and sorrow, that even the cruellest sting of all—that of dying without the presence of the Mother who bore him, and the sisters he so deeply loved—even this had no power to perturb his sombre and chastened spirit. He accepted

the last, as one grown callous from a hundred scourgings. Only one accident could have agitated my brother's mood—viz. the arrival of a sudden joy. Happiness, good fortune—these were unfamiliar visitors, and he would have been embarrassed to receive them. As it was, Heaven ruled that there should be no inconsistency between the sequence and the sequel of his experiences. Such was the brother whom I mourn. During the last two years, our relations were so close and constant, that I felt every throb of that gentle heart, and knew him as he was. But till my dying day, I shall never solve the meaning of such a destiny dealt out to such a man. In more advanced stages of society, of physical and psychical human life, these anomalies will not obtain.

Stedman's keen intellect plainly enough saw the grim ghost of Socialism, the tragedy of the want, and of the want of justice, of the poor, of the workman's skill and labor supporting the luxuries and perversions of the reckless and powerful enjoyers. When only twenty-four years old he, for himself, laid the ghost with these words:

But while I am so radical in theory, I am of course conservative in practice. Being one of the *ins*, it is my interest to crush down the *outs* and interest governs all. Who would not rather be a hammer than an anvil? Everyone to his fate! I am not going to lie awake nights, because others are slaves—No! let the niggers in Boorioboola Gha, and the slaving mechanics here take care of their own rights—I shall not do it for them. Enthusiasts may, and I hope they have their reward. I have mine—and shall not kick against the pricks. But I am *not* a misanthropist—am only indifferent, and well enough satisfied with the world. I growl at business, because I have a *right* to—being now business man and doing as well as any of them, at their dirty, sordid, but alas! alas! alas!—sadly necessary pursuit. But, Mother, I feel like Moses in the wilderness, and think perhaps I have a mission, and shall get at it one of these days, if life and strength are spared. "I see a hand they cannot see, which beckons me away!" So while I am at business, I will do just as others do, whom I see making money, and generally esteemed, and if I can bring any genius to bear, and do it more quickly and genteelly than others,

why, so much the better, and then good-bye to it forever. I should have no right to talk as I do, if I were like . . . —a sort of grand, gloomy, and peculiar Harold Skimpole—despising vulgar toil for a living and yet accepting the results of it, as the *right of a genius*—I got over *that*, about the time I began to read Byron less and Shakespeare more. But here—I must stop running on—I have not talked to you for so long that I forget my letter-writing and get gossipping. But you will read it cheerfully, as Mothers always like to hear their children prattle. I should not advance crude ideas so boldly before outsiders.

In 1877 he replied to a correspondent:

I have read with considerable sympathy your feeling and earnest poem. While not an "anarchist," my friends call me an "amateur socialist"—I once lived in a Fourieristic establishment; more, I know the heart of the poor, of the masses, and wonder not that they are restive, but that they bear their sorrows as patiently as they do—and yield so seldom to the temptings of ferocious anarchical demagogues.

And I have been greatly struck today by the message to Pulitzer from the Italian Statesman, who so grandly and calmly mentions the simple fact that for ten years Italy has given up the "useless" punishment of death.

Concerning the dubbing as "an amateur socialist" the circumstances were thus described in notes made by Stedman shortly before his death:

Some years ago, Whitelaw Reid gave a luncheon at his beautiful town residence, on which occasion I think that Henry Irving was the guest of honor. The company was select, and composed chiefly of very rich men. Besides our host there were two other writers present, between Mr. Reid and whom, as his friends and colleagues from youth, a warm unbroken attachment has continued unbroken. One of these, Mr. Howells, by virtue of his rank, of his fellow-statehood with Reid, and of his slightly longer acquaintance, the host called to his right hand—when the seats were shifting, I, as the other earliest friend present, was assigned the place at his left. Mr. Reid then called upon the magnates present to drink the health of his friend Howells, "a parlor anarchist" and of

myself, an "amateur socialist." This pleasant vein of humor was merrily enough received and indeed I would accept my degree of *Am. Soc. Doc.* right willingly, since we are all amateurs of every art except our own, while at war with amateurship in *that*. And amateurs confessedly care for what is rudimentary and emotional, as in my own *enjoyment* of music for example—although I wish the best and highest and most subtle. But the pleasantry of regarding Mr. Howells, the sturdiest of men, as a parlor knight of any stripe, and Howells, the gospeller of peace and good will, as an "anarchist" with all that implies, was exquisite enough to travel far. Mr. Taft's "parlor socialist" apparently is a compound of these two-types—now long known to the lexicon of attributes, but of which I remember no denotation earlier than the occasion of which I speak.

Several of the magnates then present, like the host himself, were among those who are recognized as considering themselves stewards of their vast estates for the good of their people and mankind. Of them, Mr. D. O. Mills, by reason of the enduring practical nature of his philanthropic demonstrations was and is of the few *personæ gratæ* with the masses and classes. Here, then, one comes to the factor that on the automatic road to social beatitude the caravan is actually headed by men who at least profess ethical motives in applying to public weal great portions of the wealth under their control. It has been justly said of some of the more conspicuous, that even if "they have purloined the stewardship, their charity is not always of the cockney breed." The question then appeals to an amateur whether, first, the magnificent gifts to museums, colleges, libraries, technical works, research, and all the rest, have not made for social advancement and equality far more rapidly—discounting even doctrinaire radicalism, and irradiating the visions of poets and prophets. Do they not accelerate? At least, they establish and constitute the most effective tide-over the world has ever known—and not only in America, but in other lands according to their resources. As for our own dear and restless, but *au fond*, wholesome land—"God's country" still—I wrote many years ago speaking of the "applied imagination" of her capitalists in material achievement, that in the Old World, thus far, ideal endorsements have come from central governments, but that in the New, democracy and republicanism were on trial; that "our theory is wrong unless

through private impulse American foundations in art, learning, humanity, are not even more continuous and munificent than those resulting in other countries from governmental promotion." The test has come out with more surplusage above contract limit than even a contractor could desire. But has it not too much so? Could any fortunes be fairly acquired, that could be answerable for such largesse?

To H. C. Robinson.

January 22, 1888.

I am thoroughly against *all* the points of your argument, as to personal liberty of construction, the right to avail—against our common-sense knowledge of the intent of a Trust—of the elasticity of language, etc., etc. I believe in the absolute sacredness and strict construction of a Trust. My strongest feeling is that of loyalty. Let a progressive, critical, or doubting partizan—clergyman—professor—or trustee—*resign*. What! work against one's army, in which I am serving, because I have decided that its side of the war is the wrong side? No: resign my commission first—then, if I choose, go over to the enemy. I am a radical, a liberal, in religion (with a poetic fondness, no less, for ivy, organ-music, stained-glass, and a ritual!) but I utterly despise men like ———, and ———, who *stay in* a Church and try to undermine its authority, and set up for themselves. I thoroughly admire and respect a hard-shell, sincere, believing, working, self-effacing old-fashioned Calvanistic person—when I find him, which is d—d seldom of late years!

There is *no* doubt in my mind that the founders of the Andover school *meant* and stated *clearly* exactly the reverse of the new-fangled liberal-construction doctrine. And I have no doubt *you* have no doubt about the matter.

But,—your "incidental" fourth point, that "the limitation etc., etc., of unalterable opinion, etc., etc., is against public policy" is the strong and conclusive part of your clear-cut brief. With that all free-minded earth-dwellers must heartily agree. No generation should have the power of forcing future generations to wear its small-clothes. The glory of civilization is that its law (not its laws) *is* elastic, progressive, and that its lawyers—though solemnly pretending to believe in their rules and traditions—smash them utterly when progress, policy, the spirit of the time, are against

them. They do the same, by the way, whether the spirit of the time, or the *King*, or the *ruling party*, is good or bad. . . .

In our own time and country, see how the Supreme Court has veered to the wind of the dominant party—right or wrong.

But come out openly. Declare the Andover Creed offensive to our advanced humanity. Don't try to give it a lying "liberal construction."

To his friend C. P. Huntington he wrote in 1899:

You see, although a Wall Street man, I confess to being a socialist, but of the evolutionary and not the revolutionary class. And I venture to say that I think the greatest practical socialists are the foremost financiers, capitalists, and constructors in the world—in short, men of your own type. And I believe that every one of you, in his heart of hearts, agrees with me that this is so and that before the end of the coming century the acquisition of individual wealth will not be the main object of personal ambition. It is strange to me that many sincere "agitators" do not comprehend this and do not see that all combinations, whether for trade or transportation, are rapidly advancing stages of that socialism, which is simply coöperation carried to its logical perfection. Finally, I must confess that of late years the world's men of action in their wonderful enterprises have given proofs of creative imagination surpassing that which, with now and then a great exception, inspires the poetry of the period.

To the Same.

October 18, 1899.

Had I not promised to forego all but imperative writing, while convalescing down here, I would have sent you a note ere this in reply to your letter of Sept. 14th. For I wished to make an explanation of my own—that is, to say that you had misconstrued a phrase that probably was open to two interpretations.

I really would not have you believe me so narrow, poor in observation, unphilosophical, as to suppose that men of your class—or even most of the vastly larger number of men in a less prominent rank, but yet possessed of wealth, force, initiative—are devoted chiefly to the increase of their fortunes. Often, with such, further accumulation is a "side-product" or a means to an end. I take

it that Cecil Rhodes is a man of that sort, though doubtless the Britisher and the Boer regard his idea from different points of view. But he counts in the progress of the world. Perhaps monomaniacs like Mr. Sage and Mrs. Green (who should have been man and wife) should be excepted; but Uncle Russell is a good preserver at all events, and I suppose Aunt Hetty has some ideal connected with her son.

My remark applied to the great body of men, high and low, working for a living and something more. I conceive, with respect to everybody, that within a hundred years it will not be necessary, nor seem desirable, to expend much time and energy for subsistence and individual wealth. I am not absurd enough to expect any arbitrary partition of wealth as now held. But let me simply repeat that I had no thought of implying that "all," or even most, rich men make the acquisition of individual wealth the main object of ambition.

I am not sorry for the misinterpretation, however, since it has called forth from you one of the most interesting statements to be found in the whole course of my professional or business correspondence. A man is to be envied who, with a career remarkable as yours, is able and willing to set himself right by such an exposition of the spirit that has given force to his historic achievements.

To have been the general of such industrial armies, the creator of continental highways,—it is more than falls to the lot of kings, soldiers, even statesmen. It is to have made plausible the dreams of poets and humanitarians. Goethe was of this opinion when he wrote the final scenes of the second part of Faust.

"And yet, and yet," Stedman somewhere writes, as to Socialism, "Want and wickedness are so often the wedded parents of grace." He pondered much on the subject throughout his life, and in a late "Preachment" he concludes that his associates in the *Brownstone Utopia* "were practically right, and that Socialism is right in so far as it covers coöperation."

Upon Stedman's table this note was found:

If I were a politically ambitious young man, I think, on the whole, I should join the party of the future with much the same

hope and zeal with which I was in at the birth of the Republican party, and cast my first vote for Fremont. Now that I think of it I have had the misfortune, or fortune, except in this matter of life-long partisanship, to be in the minority; and as to Socialism, if there should be any Terror, probably I should be among those who suffered for I doubtless should have the tastes and weaknesses of my caste, the old stock, now passing off, and could not go with the extreme radicals. Mr. Godkin once asked me, with some disgust, "What, would you violate your principles under any emergency?" I said "Certainly—what are ordinary everyday principles for, except to be violated?" Seeing his disgust—I did not, as I ought, have pointed out that he did also,—I explained that behind and above all principles of ordinary appreciation, I would be obedient in essaying the higher principles, the higher law, all the rest, the last remnants of bigotry which every decent man carries in his own breast; that which makes even a lie equitable for the honor of a woman, the payment of a debt of gratitude to a blood-brother, the salvation of one's country or those looking to him for protection. I doubt if I would give up my allegiance to these, or even to good taste, sympathy, for any party of the future.

So great an artist in poetry as Stedman could not fail to be deeply interested in other modes of expression of the art-impulse. Poor as he was he spent a large part of his income in the purchase of paintings, engravings, and other art-objects, in tickets of admission to theater, opera, concert, etc. It may be added that art was brought into home, his home-life, and into his life generally. Even to his letters themselves, for he was pleased when a letter was well-phrased; he looked at it objectively; when read to him his eyes would sparkle and he would say—"Well, now, that's pretty well turned, isn't it?" He was perhaps the earliest to urge our Art-loving millionaires to buy for the Metropolitan Museum the pictures, e. g., of Gêrôme and Fortuny. Ward said that Mr. Stedman's knowledge and criticism of sculpture was perfect, that he knew its technicalities, appreciating the truth that only certain things could be expressed in it, etc. The stimulating and sound help to the musicians

who gave his poems musical settings also illustrated how thorough here also, how faultless, was his taste. He wrote noteworthy letters to the newspapers concerning musical and dramatic art and artists. His rush to succor Kate Field after a first "failure" as an actress is memorable. Says MacKaye, "On the opening night in New York of my play *Sappho and Phaon*, Stedman sat, in the row in front of me, with my friends George Grey Barnard, William V. Moody, E. A. Robinson and Ridgely Torrence. After the play, as we were going out, he took me aside in the foyer and said: 'MacKaye, you have vindicated my prophecies. I wouldn't have missed this for a month out of my life—and you know I haven't much left of that. Goodnight.'"

Great actors and singers were his friends, and he theirs. He had planned at the request of his friend, Edwin Booth, to write a Greek play for the actor. In his essay on *William Blake* one reads: "If I were asked to name the most grievous thing in modern Art, I should say it is the lack of some kind of faith." Of Zona Gale's *Romance Island*, he wrote: "I once heard Emerson say, speaking quietly at a dinner to Froude, —and whether his own phrase or borrowed I can not now recall,—that the English is 'a stern and dreadful tongue.' And so it is, yet it can be the most luxuriant, and most seraphic as well, of all tongues; and its spiritual and voluptuous passages are more impressive than those of the mid-sea languages, for the contrast of their setting—for the action and reaction of the two basic elements from which it is the warp and woof."

The appended selections from letters further illustrate the breadth of Stedman's sympathies and his encouragement of the popular appreciation of art.

From Calvin Thomas.

Mr. Stedman and Mr. George Cary Eggleston and I were returning home from the funeral of Frank Stockton in Philadelphia. The three of us were standing near the bow of the ferry-boat, crossing from Jersey City, when the conversation turned upon the much-

berated "ugliness" of New York, about which a prominent and highly-respected man had lately been saying something in public. Something in the talk—I forget what—set Mr. Stedman aflame, and he proceeded to deliver an impassioned little discourse on the unique beauty of the scene before us, the astounding transformation going on daily under the eyes of New Yorkers, and the esthetic narrowness of the folk who couldn't feel it. I can not remember the words he used, but the import and the manner of his utterance are with me ineffaceably; so that, whenever I hear people talking about the ugliness and unpoetic vulgarity of the big city, I see the flashing eye and animated gesture with which the poet Stedman insisted on its wonderful beauty.

Speaking of your review I felt that you struck the right note as to my having held up my hands to the poetic side of my foster-mother Manhattan, and, in truth, my soul went out to her, though she has been for years as stony-hearted as Oxford Street to De Quincey. To the present day I do not really know her, and precious little care does she take of her brats individually. Still I love her, as the dwarf did the giantess, at the dime-museum,—by sections

April 23, 1892.

. . . Success to the cause of Free Art. I am a believer in what is called the American system in the protection of our home industries. That has nothing to do with the cause you are so brilliantly and patriotically advocating. A duty on works of art does not protect our native artists—it simply retards their education and checks the development of a masterly home-school. Books are cheap. The masterpieces of literature, ancient and modern, are found in our remotest villages. Hence our writers have their masters and models close at hand, and some of our best and most national authors are found in the provincial districts of the country. But our artists can only study the masterpieces of painting, sculpture, design, in the centres of wealth and population, and *there* only through the readiness of amateurs to buy and import the beautiful and costly productions which show how skilled artists do their work.

The more plentiful these noble objects become, the more we shall produce canvasses and plastic art that will enhance not only

the honor but also the commercial resources of our country. On the score, then, of both ideal and material progress, Art should be free. Who demands that it should be otherwise? I firmly believe that nothing but the *vis inertiæ* of a barbarous usage keeps the art-tariff upon our statute-books.

To Miss Kate Field.

May 26, 1892.

If *Kate Field's Washington* were not (as it is) the brightest weekly that comes to us, your success in reducing the art duties would have been its sufficient excuse for being.

I say success, because such revolutions don't go backward. Your next campaign against the tariff on foreign paintings will "reform it altogether."

A next Winter's Art Congress seems to me one of your own specific, inventive ideas. Yes, and I should add, inclusive. Perhaps it is just as well that a Government "Commission of Art and Architecture" should have been deferred until now. We used to deprecate the ramshackle structure of our buildings. Now we see that it was as well that they were made so that they could readily be pulled down when we should learn how to combine architectural strength and beauty. I think that a Government Commission now would include architects, sculptors, painters, etc., upon whose judgments we could rest secure.

Our governmental theory is not paternal. But the influence of those high in its administration is unquestionable. The open support given to our copyright movement by the President and Mrs. Cleveland was the omen of its speedy triumph. The White House now can do much for American Art. A National Loan Exhibition will do even more, as the conspicuous preamble to the Art Exposition of '93. Go on, and open the eyes of our people to the fidelity and beauty of our native landscape school; to the fact that such a school exists, that we have painters of our skies and woods and waters as faithful and luminous as those whose canvases reach us (and still teach us) from abroad. Do justice, too, to our brilliant rising school of portraiture. Again, what foreign artists equal ours in drawing, on the wood or otherwise, for illustration? Where are architects of town façades and of country houses more ingenious and tasteful, at this moment, than in these States both East and West?

To John La Farge.

November 21, 1878.

Now, if the St. Paul should not be sold, and should return here for sale, *let me know of it.* I fully understand your feelings about the taste and sympathies of our time and people. New York really cares little for art, music, poetry, except to *outvie* other cities—has little taste for the best or highest—and our journals cater to what they deem the public taste. They will praise and understand our *piano music*, but not our *organ harmonies*. Men like you, even men like myself, *belong to the next generation of Americans*. That is all there is about it.

To Mrs. Rachel McAuley.

March 23, 1892.

I have outlived many illusions, but never our priceless delights of the stage. The Play is still as dear to me as in youth; I never have blunted my zest in it, and all its players—all children of the Drama—seem to me almost the brotherhood and sisterhood of my own art.

It is fine to know that in this country at least, the noble offices of the Actors' Fund are to have a high fulfilment.

To Edwin Booth.

February 18, 1886.

In my opinion your Sir Giles Overreach is one of your most wonderful impersonations. I had no idea of its fire, picturesqueness, *strength*, until last evening—no idea of the passion you throw into the part, and of the startling play of features which is so dramatic a portion of your action. Familiar as I am with so many of your *rôles*, I seem to know you in a new light. Your art is a strange one—I could not realize that the simple-hearted friend and good fellow, whom I had chatted with on Sunday, was somewhere *in* the haughty, cruel, rapacious, but magnificent Sir Giles.

In its way, this part is as effective as your unique "Bertuccio." I noted, last night—whether it be due to the costume, or to your stouter habit of late years—your increasing resemblance to the pictures of your father.

Well: you have given me a new emotion. Sir Giles will haunt me for some days yet.

To Heromich Shugio.

Christmas, 1886.

You certainly give the Honorable Father and Honorable Mother of this household most exquisite proof of your national faculty of "assimilation"—concerning which we discovered the other night.

These fascinating results of your Oriental arts, with their respective charms of enamel, glaze, color, form, are—though silent—most eloquent in revealing your brotherhood in the sentiment of our Western Christmas—the time when Peace comes to all men, and East and West meet as one.

In looking—and one never tires of looking—at this piece of Cloisonnê, I can think of nothing but Keats's apostrophe to the Grecian Urn:

"Thou still unravished bride of quietness:"

—And that the bride is bronzed of hue makes the line still more apt, since Silence comes with darkness, and Beauty grows more amorous with night.

But in the courtesy that prompts these gifts, and which we value at its full worth, you "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art." For we know that under it lies a feeling too sincere to be wholly due even to the fine Art of Pleasing—in which you gentry of the Lotos Isles so easily surpass the world. In short, we feel that you really care for us, because we have liked you so much from the outset!

To John M. Gray.

April 29, 1878.

These newspaper-notices, hastily and poorly written, still, *do* convey a general idea of La Farge's peculiar qualities, and I can at least tell you who and what he is. His qualities are best set forth in the extract from the "Centennial" art report, which I enclose. As for himself: John La Farge is an American, of French descent, born and resident in Newport, Rhode Island, but with a Winter-studio in New York City. Having "wherewithal" he has been able to follow the bent of his dreamy, poetic, and very original and subtle genius. Is very unequal like most original men, and often fails to realize his conceptions; but when he does succeed, they are marvels of poetic handling, color, and light. He is a very intellectual and *soulful* artist, and profoundly in earnest. He has a rare knowledge of ecclesiastical art, and is now

sing it to advantage in the decoration of the two finest Gothic nurches in America—Reverend Phillips Brooks's in Boston, and t. Thomas's in New York. Has a tendency toward what is termed re-Raphaelitism, but above all is, just, John La Farge—is himelf: very original, very poetic and suggestive.

All this I take pleasure in writing to you. If you indeed love nose strange, rare spirits—Dürer and Blake, you would underand La Farge, and soon perceive the secret of my daring to place im in such company.

Certainly I shall see Homer Martin in London. He and I are retty good friends, and fellow Centurions. After Inness's, his ork seems to me more original, broad, imaginative, than that of ther American painters—and yet Wyant is full of poetry, his rush seems an extension of his soul. (1882.)

Invited to welcome The State Teachers' Association Stedman advised letting a boy browse as he pleased in the library f the house. Well, his "delightful but irreverent friend Eugene Field" said he had tried it with his boy, with the result hat the boy's favorites were lives of pirates, highwaymen, nd Burton's "Arabian Nights." Stedman replied that, "a Field Library and a Field progeny in combination, would upset any theory." He advised the pedagogues to teach heir pupils to write a better hand, spell more correctly, etc. That of the teacher and the physician he held to be the most useful callings in the world.

Henry Irving is a spectacle, rather than an actor. It is the picture of the "character" that takes us, in his Vicar of Wakefield, Robespierre, Becket, Dante. At his best acting, though, which always coincides with his worst elocution, he is sometimes as effective as a great player speaking a language other than our own —and which we are masters of. This is the worst that can be said for him. He gained his supreme vogue with a generation that had not known players both great and intelligent; and he gained it by appealing to the eye with familiar masterpieces of painting, with stage settings incomparable, and by tact, poise, the dignity and social implements of a gentleman.

Of Paderewski, a note-book entry reads:

Before seeing him, I saw one day, at a newsstand, what I too to be a tinted portrait of Swinburne—as I knew him in 187 Going nearer, I found it was—Paderewski.

Swinburne's mass of reddish hair; his forehead, nose, wea sensitive mouth, small chin—only, the hair lighter and mor "fluffy," the head not so large for the body, the mouth as weak but the chin a little stronger. The *expressions* of the faces ar strangely alike. At once, I recalled the fact that the musica critics, in describing Paderewski's method and marvellous execu tion, had used almost the same language, phrases, that are in m chapter on Swinburne. It occurred to me that the two men ar as strangely alike in their *specific* and phenomenal endowment and training as in their bodies—*mutatis mutandis: i. e. P: Musi : : S: poetic rhythm.*

As to *Henry James*, I call him (in a letter) "our master in th arts of labyrinthine syntax and the crafts of linguistic evasion."

My literary style is both condensed and flowing. As a news paper writer I was refined and eloquent; as an essayist I boil dow what I write, so as to have every sentence contain a thought, fact, an image, or a saying. My style is direct, and, in the natura English order—as one talks: I have little patience with the ex tremely indirect style so current with the euphuistic schoo whose effect is to suggest their meaning by over-subtle suggestio and innuendo. My criticism is synthetic—my only effort to dis criminate between the enduring and the temporary.

To Maurice Thompson.

September 22, 1892.

. . . Therefore I would be judged by you, if in public, at som time when I might have done something—i. e. have produced some thing—especially prompting your consideration, and in the cours of the specific *aria* of my life-intent rather than of the *obligato* Now, for the last ten years, the inevitable baton of *Circumstanc* has confined me chiefly to the *obligato*. I have done nothing tha I most wished or hoped to do, but have done what I found mysel strangely involved in doing. Of course I do not affect to regret m prose-essays—their style, their purport, their reception. The contain ideas which came to me in boyhood, and which I the

eclared I should put in print whenever I gained reputation enough
o "float" them. (You remember that Chase said he "issued
reenbacks in order to float his bonds.") But all my reputation,
own to '73, was that of a poet—though, like you, I rarely wrote
poem that did not first write me, and compel me to give it out.
am quite sincere in saying that I have had all the critical atten-
on which I deserved or wished. My family have half a dozen
ig scrap-books full of reviews, etc., called forth by my long-ago
ollections of verse, by my critical volumes, etc. In short, all that
have *done* has received all the consideration one could wish.
But much of my collected edition of poetry I hope to winnow out.
ince 1876 I have been unable to edit and collect my own poems—
hough having written perhaps the best of them, in infrequent
nd spontaneous moods and chances, since that date. Meantime,
ny friend Mr. Aldrich, for example, has issued and revised his
oems, in yearly and exquisitely tasteful reprints. And mean-
while I have been obliged to do so much reading of other people's
ooks, and so much heart-wearing letter-writing, that the vitality
hus exhausted would serve to make you or me immortal!

In short, my dear fellow, I still hope—the hope is my Phantom Ship—to get back to my desired *métier*. I am full of grief that would be remorse if the coil and chance of life would have permitted me to do any otherwise than I have done. I was "cleaned out" in an hour, eight years ago, and loaded with debts of honor, at the very time when I was arranging to devote myself *wholly* to letters. Since then, I've not had one little "Pippa Passes" day of my own. I was under contract to edit the "Library of American Literature." The work makes for patriotism: it was worth while; but it keeps me from doing other things which others cannot do.

Meanwhile, as about most people, I suppose, an utterly false though amazingly respectable ideal of my perturbed self has grown up hither and yon. After a life largely of freedom, adventure, and all the vicissitudes of Bohemianism, I find myself (*Un Médecin Malgré lui*) an authoritative Philistine, a preacher instead of a poet, a "banker" instead of a struggling and gambling debtor, a citizen of standing hereabout, and without means or time or strength to accept honors and live up to the position. It is all perfectly absurd. I shall yet *make a bolt*, get off into the woods, and be my true self again—become, in Lowell's words, an "escaped convict of 'Propriety.'"

If you and I ever meet, and you *must* come and see me—either in the midwinter "season" or in Summer at my country lodge—we shall have a good time together. Have I indicated, or have not, from what has been written, that I should rather have you review me when there is some special occasion—when my plan is better rounded? I feel deeply your suggestion that, as a young man, you would do unto me as I have tried to do to others. But in confidence, I have *held in* various friends (of the *Atlantic*, *Century*, *Harper's*, staffs, etc.,) and have said to them: "Thanks indeed. But don't tie ribbons on the horse when he is not in the Corso!"

If you don't agree with me, I must confess that a man who has sketched, as I have, so many of his compeers without leave, has no rights that any good critic is bound to respect. The main *facts* of my random career, prior to the Turnbull Lectures, are correctly stated in Appleton's Encyclopedia of Biography. But what are dates and titles in the true story of one's life!

To Hamilton W. Mabie.

July 10, 1896.

We are neither of us Shakespeare (or Shakespere if you like), and I at least am no Landor—yet, I am wondering whether you will not feel as "toplofty" as I did, when I tell you what a bright woman said of your last paper in the remarkable series upon "Living Critics." She quoted, in sooth, Charles Lamb's saying of Landor's Citation of Shakespeare—that only one of two men could have been its author, to wit: the man that wrote it or the man upon whom it was written. I promptly rebuked her, and told her in all honesty there was no alternative in this instance—that circumstance had made my own work ruinously intermittent and not continuous, and that at each long interval, when *both* health and leisure have given me a brief chance for study and composition, I have had to begin all over again—as to purpose, style, and expression. A field *too* long fallowed grows thick with weeds, brambles, and around their region even "poison ivy." For a year I have been absolutely *unable* through various conditions, to write a page—how can a workman who has to confess this, merit your fine consideration? No—even upon so light a theme as my past has afforded you, I recognize and admire a touch, a compression, a synthesis, in your style and thought,

which would be quite beyond me—and which proves the worth of health of body and mind, and of the consecutive exercise of one's craft which you have (fortunately for yourself—and for American literature) maintained.

When the July *Bookman* reached me I was in bed with the grippe, but if I had been well, I couldn't at once have written you, since I felt much that one is quite unable, where one's self is concerned, to put in words. No such article, of course, has ever appeared before with respect to my prose studies nor will it need appear again. I understand perfectly, and am affected by, the kind of respect which a younger writer inevitably cherishes for one whom he doubtless over-valued during his student period, and see that you merely hint at short-comings which *I* see that you perfectly comprehend. In fact, as you show a thorough acquaintance with the matter reviewed, none knows better than I that you must recognize them. So I am enormously grateful to you for still retaining a liking for this derelict!

If I ever do get into the ark again, you will find me recognizing and serving under you as its public commander. Your book just out on "Nature and Culture" has fairly settled that in my mind. I had seen in some paper copied that exquisite prose-poem on "The Rhythmic Movement"—itself a paradigm of its own argument—and during the last few days I have read the other essays for sheer enjoyment of your now perfected English style.

You are easily our best equipped and most accomplished essayist, and I see that people are finding it out—and, like myself, are grateful to you for the restoration and advancement of one of the most captivating traditional forms of English prose.

This is my first letter, since that illness. Hence its length—yet I started to say only that 'tis an age since I have seen you, and that I wish you would soon make a pilgrimage to my present retreat—for I have fled like Lot from the city of the Plain, and if you will pass a night and a day with me it will do us both good *after the 15th.* I expect to be here throughout the Summer.

Stedman elsewhere asks:

Do our rigid realists in fiction, or those in art, comprehend that from now on they will place themselves, relatively to those who work imaginatively, in the class with photographers? Photography supersedes painting, in the reproduction of matter of fact.

Art can best elevate or beguile us by portraying one's conception of the beauty, glory, sentiment, of what *may* be—of what the soul feels to be within the possibilities of existence, something rarer than our experience thus far. Why should market-novelists and romancers travel to get the exact details of the scenes in which they set their plots and passages? The time is at hand for creative imagining. A concept in prose or poetry is better than an eye-witness report. I recall how much truer to the lure and marvel of the tropics was Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" though purely imaginary, than his "At Last"—written after his sojourn in Trinidad.

Doubtless the Sublime, in pictorial art at least is thus far at its highest in the work of those painters who, consciously or unconsciously, have felt and suggested the elemental Swirl of the Universe—to which all motion, macrocosmic or microcosmic, tends to conform. Michael Angelo's genius even in his unscientific era—moved in its spiral; then, near our time, Blake; later, in their lesser way, Rossetti and our own Vedder—the last-named with the clear-cut assurance of modern knowledge, and therefore surrendering the impressiveness of that *ignotum* which is *pro magnifico*.

A host of glad witnesses would testify to Mr. Stedman's friendliness, kindness, and geniality. Beside the letters already given many others would emphasize the common verdict. To Warner for instance, he wrote: "I have always declared that decent men do grow more heart-tender as they grow older, and I believe with you that love and friendship are what we really get out of life. 'Lord, keep our hearts green'!" He was slow to accuse or see bad in any one, and was beautifully free from jealousy. When he was loved he loved. Sometimes indifference, or worse, in others, would pique him to conquer them, but upon his part there was afterwards little real affection. Nor was his friendliness confined to his equals, it extended even to a mind astray with insanity! His servants and assistants loved him, and he treated the lowest with gentlemanly courtesy. He was a good companion, even with sailors and workmen, and he

introduced the pilot of his vessel at his club. Few would have so gently and fully forgiven a sinner as did he one who had egregiously plagiarized one of Stedman's essays. He took a lively interest in other men's work, quickly and generously recognizing excellencies, and, except in a light passing way, he was seemingly oblivious of imperfections positive or negative. His kindness was not by any means shown in words alone; beside the laborious and to himself injurious letter-writing, in acts, in lending money, and even in forgiving and forgetting its non-return by the unfortunate. "He has practiced Emerson's Gospel, 'Help Somebody,' " said a friend. How happy he must have been when Aldrich wrote him, straight, with open eyes: "There are three or four men in the world from whom I do not require frequent letters to be assured of their loyal and unchangeable friendship. I should know just where to find them at the end of fifty years' silence, and you are one of those men, Ned." And to Tracy Robinson, Stedman wrote: "You have a genius for friendship, and half the year the leisure to enjoy and cultivate it. It is the luxury of Colonists and provincials—or of those whom Fate grants the *means* for rare pursuits. As for me, I am a *worker*—tied to the oar, and have learned to suppress my emotions. But I can be loyal, when needed. And there are *times* when I can yield myself up to sentiment."

Certain phases of this characteristic are brought out in the quotations from letters which follow:

I am suffering such remorse as never has assailed me hitherto. With all my sins, I never, until this Winter, have slighted those little *devoirs*—those "offices of tenderness," in Tennyson's phrase —which belong to ordinary friendship and courtesy.

To an unfortunate friend whom Stedman supported in his old age he wrote:

It is pleasant, at all events, that we *are* both *alive*, and that you show the same warm heart beating under your ample breast. This letter brings back the times when we were patriotic, and when it

was something to be a patriot—when every patriot *counted.* The only question now is, "Under which party will the most money be made?"—It gives me a genuine pang to think of you in struggling circumstances, at our age, and after so many years of change. *I* have only the odds and ends of a future, but I *do* make a little income from my books, and I do manage,—uptown and down,—to keep a snug and warm fireside for myself and my family. There you are always welcome,—your old place is *always* there—and pray find it oftener.

How kind [one wrote] and right you are in urging possible troubles in business matters as an excuse for Mr. D.'s behavior! That is even touchingly like unto Stedman the critic, whose keen eye is always after extenuation: one of those things for which I love you. Perhaps my letter belied me a little in seeming harsh. Mr. D. is reserved, as you say: he has "an emotional side to his nature," and many, many fine, just instincts—*if he were left to himself.*

Stedman's good friend Professor Morse thus writes of an early time:

The year had been a full one. Indeed all the years were full for the man who led the "strenuous life," half in business, half at the desk of the over-strained writer, and a third half—for there are three half-days in the really busy man's day in New York—a third half after dinner in the gay centres of society. Stedman was in many of them; never a man so temperamentally active. To every discomforting breeze in a friend's life, he was like a sensitive plant. Mentally he felt the unhappiness, and in the accompanying helpfulness, he himself was apt to find disquiet in the nerve centres, and be obliged to go helpless "into hiding," as he always called it. Yet he could always find time to acknowledge what he was pleased to think a good turn done him, however trivial it may have been. One of these over-generous acknowledgments I find among my letters from him. Just what it relates to I do not now recall. It was written in the Autumn of 1877, November 20. He had gone to live at Summit, New Jersey, fleeing from those "irresistible social attractions." Days on Wall Street, evenings of composition, and nights with his friends in a whirl of up-town gaiety, had become too severe a strain. Yet for an hour he forgot these and wrote:

My dear Mr. Morse:

No bush is required for the good tonic of your letter and its quality is so kind that I discover an eloquence both scholarly and "characteristic" in its very penmanship. Besides, if you had flattered me so tunefully in Syriac or Coptic, I should have been at the pains of learning either text, that I might have the pleasant benefit of language so soothing to mine ear. A friend who cares enough for what I write to *buy it*, and then cares enough for me to tell me how it pleases and displeases him, is a friend after my own heart—and one whose "wounds are faithful"—(Proverbs 27, 6). (I append the reference, as you were not reared, like myself, in the nurture and admonition of the Congregational Church.) Seriously, I am touched and gratified by your note, and thoroughly in accordance with its criticism. "Nathless" and "not for naught" *are* bad: and your art instinct is sure in detecting the fact that the prelude of "Beatrice" has no business there. You mention your first acquaintance with Hawthorne's work. I was lucky enough, in youth, to get hold, first, of his Twice-Told Tales, Mosses, and other short imaginative tales—and thence to work up legitimately, to his larger works—to grow with him, I might say. How those stories thrilled and delighted me in childhood! They revealed a new world, and I religiously believed all the witchcraft; and took in their delicate spirit of awe and beauty. Of the pieces in my own little book—which one, by the way, was made up by an impulse, so that I might clear away those random poems before completing a new work—of those pieces, "The Lord's-Day Gale," in certain respects, suited my own fancy the most, as a bit of objective lyrical painting; and I had difficulties to contend with, in the effort to make a feeling and effective poem out of a storm and a *general* disaster. Still, I think there is a true North-East atmosphere in that poem—and one into which coast-wise New Englanders can enter. Do you know Mr. F. B. Sanborn? He lunched at my office to-day, and I was greatly interested in him. With all his independence and eccentricities, he is a typical Down-East scholar, worker, and thinker, and a very remarkable man. But let me close by thanking you again for your sympathetic comprehension of what I try to do, and including your wife in my thanks. We all belong to the same brotherhood, and know one another. Poets write for poets, as women dress for women. I should like to see what your Lyrical Muse did for you a year ago, and what she is

doing now; and when I return to town, possibly you'll give me the chance?

Ever sincerely yours,
E. C. Stedman.

To William Winter.

March 31, 1886.

My dearest Winter,

I am deeply touched by your exquisite recognition, in your time of "darkness and the shadow," of the request which I made of you when all unaware what gloom had fallen on your house.

Nothing that I can *say* will express my feelings,—nothing convey my appreciation of the anguish which a nature like yours is now compelled to endure.

For myself, how little I deserve this gift of certainly the most precious—certainly the unique relic of George Arnold, the friend of our youth! Of course there is no other bit of his writing that either you or I could value more than this perfect holograph of his most *distinctive* poem. It is as if one owned the cap, or sword, of Mercutio. Yet it gives me a thrill to have you transfer it to me in this wise,—as if little in life, or even life itself, were longer of high worth to you.

However little the contents of the book, which I send you, may belong to present thoughts like yours, I yet send it—just as I would pass my arm around your neck were you here. It is my extra copy of the rare limited edition of "Songs and Ballads," edited by me for the Book Fellows' Club, and privately printed at much expense—the Japanese paper having been brought from Paris for this book alone. Keep it, for it now conveys my constant affection, sympathy, honor, to you who were my comrade when most of its fancies were begotten.

The portrait of you, by Mr. Marble, is simply wonderful. No crayon, surely, was ever so inspired before.—I mail this letter, but, on reflection, shall leave the book for you (as I will not trust that to the mail) with the cashier of the *Tribune* office. Good-night, and God bless you and in some wise lighten your burthen. When the Spring sunshine makes Earth, at least, a little fairer, I shall be fain to go and see you, and I am always,

Your devoted friend
Edmund C. Stedman.

The preceding letter has been inserted by Mr. William Winter in his copy of "Songs and Ballads," which bears this inscription:

TO MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER-POET,

WILLIAM WINTER

THESE SONGS OF THE HAPPIER DAYS GONE BY

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

March
1886

TO

HENRY MILLS ALDEN, ESQ.

LORD HIGH EXECUTIONER,

ETC.

DEAR A.,

'Tis a year
Since my "Burr" reached your bureau,
And there he's still pining
In carcere duro.
If Aaron himself
Were the widow pursuing
So long, he would never
Succeed in his "Wooing!"

E. C. STEDMAN.

April 25, 1887.

My dear old Sober-Sides, (From whom even my most absurd nonsense can't extort a grin!) I shall be charmed to get a Cox photo of you. His portrait of the meditative Gilder is simply the most artistic and painting-like work ever produced by the cameron—even by the (Mrs.) Cameron.

I write also, to say—*please*, don't put that light and graceful Colonial love-ballad of mine in your next Christmas number. It was given you for *Fall or Spring wear*—like my Witchcraft pieces:

This song was made to be sung in bright weather,
And they who sing it twixt snow and heather—
Will fail of its music altogether.

Next, it is too bad to keep one of my lighter pieces a year and a half and then publish it beside *strong* efforts by Mr. Aldrich and others.

But the main trouble is that I have written an important Christmas Poem for *Wide Awake* next Winter, under an old English title and for illustration. It will be hard luck if my only two magazine poems for '87 (except one in the *Century* last February) should come in the same month. This happened to me a few years ago, to my lasting disgust.

To Levi Holbrook.

January 3, 1888.

If "Watch Night" and Hutton's "Sunday Night" had not completed my reduction to a voiceless "residuum," I should have broken into Stevenson's Pirate Chorus:

"Sixteen men on the dead man's chest!
Blood! blood! and *a bottle of Rum!*"

In sooth, never did I see a double-pint of that sea-faring tipple put up in more attractive guise, and none ever reached me from a stauncher or more beloved messmate. The very sight of it checked me in the act of "swearing off" from my old frailties; and if *you* have made any rash vows for 1888, and will come down to 44 East 26th Street, you shall recant—and we'll have the aid of this very bottle to do penance for us.

To William Sharp.

October 10, 1889.

'Tis quite surprising,—the severity wherewith you have been missed, in this now very quiet household, since you looked down upon its members from the Servia's upper-deck, very much like Campanini in Lohengrin when the Swan gets fairly under way! The quiet that settled down was all the stiller, because you and we had to get through with so much in your ten days *chez nous*. Lay one consolation to heart: you won't have to do *that* again; when you return, 'twill be to a city of which you have deduced a general idea, from the turbid phantasmagoria of your days and nights here. In short, you will come back to a bride you have possessed and "broken in," with nothing afterward to do but to "enjoy" her as a wife at your leisure. (There is a clever, though

properly esoteric, metaphor there, which I leave you to study out.)

The conclusions on our side were that we had formed a liking for you such as we have retained after the visits of very few guests from the Old World or the New. Well as I knew your books and record, we had the vaguest notion of your *self*. 'Tis rare indeed that a clever writer or artist strengthens his hold upon those who admire his work, by personal intimacy. What can I say more than to say that we thoroughly enjoyed your visit; that we think immeasurably more of you than before you came; that you are upon our list of friends to whom we are attached for life—for good and ill. We know our own class, in taste and *breeding*, when we find them—which is not invariably among our different guests. Nor can one have your ready art of charm and winning, without a good heart and comradeship under it all,—even though intent (and rightly) on nursing his career and making all the points he has a right to make. Apropos of this I may congratulate you on the impression you made here on the men and women whom you chanced at this season to meet: that which you left with *us* passes the border of respect, and into the warm and even lowland of affection.

That is all I ever shall say about our acquaintanceship. Being an Anglo-Saxon, 'tis not once in half a decade that I bring myself to say so much.

The first Century "meet" occurred, as you know, on that Saturday evening. I stayed at home, for rest, and sat up with the Canterbury "Marston," which I was so glad to find—with your "Human Inheritance" and the autographic poem—upon my table. I read your biography of poor Philip with the deepest interest, and found it a model of its kind—one of your *best pieces of English*, charged with feeling and perfectly sound in its criticism. I see that 'tis dedicated to Dr. M., and am the more surprised that he should have taken umbrage at any portion of it. In my opinion, nothing has been done for Marston, from first to last, that will serve to keep the memory of his life and poetry alive so surely as this little book, and your selection of his lyrics, sonnets, etc., is the best that could be made. It is all that one wants. Altogether, the volume has more *human* interest than any other of the series. . . .

To-morrow morning we go to "Kelp Rock." The magnificent Fall weather is still with us, and I hope some of it has convoyed

you over seas. And now, my dear boy, what shall I say of the charming surprise with which you and your florist so punctually greeted my birthday. At fifty-six ("Oh, woful when!") one is less than ever used to the melting mood, but you drew a tear to my eyes. The roses are still all over our house, and the letter is your best autograph in my possession.

We look forward to seeing you again with us, of course,—because, if for no other reason, you and yours always have one home ready for them in the States, at least while a roof is over our heads —even though the Latin wolf be howling at our door.

From William Sharp.

October, 1896.

Dear Poet, Friend, Comrade,
and Edmund mo ghraidh,
and Stedman mo caraid—

Slainte! 's mile Failte!

which, being interpreted, means "Hail, and a Thousand Greetings!" I hope this will reach you on your birthday, and that it will carry to you my loving good wishes. May your new year bring you health, weal, peace, joy, and happiness of all kinds. Only, don't be too good. The gods only bless with the left hand when one is too good. A right-hand blessing, even with the occasional severe spank that goes therewith, is much better. Seek it, my dear silver-haired youth. What a good thing it is to be alive—and to be, like you, a poet. That is, to love. We are the crowned lovers of the world, we, and our lovely embodied Dreams —the gods bless their leaping pulses, their red lips, their white breasts, their brave laughing souls, beautiful Sunbeams of life that they are! Do not think because I have not written but once this year that I am forgetful. For one thing, I've had a decade boiled down into this year! Then, too, I have been away so much in France, Italy and Scotland. Then, I have suffered—but of this, nothing in a birthday letter. And—well, I've been a "Poet"! . . .

Personal poems, the homage of Singers to one another, poems of minor special occasion, dedications, tributes,—these exhibit a deal as to genuineness and generosity of

character, the absence of rivalry, the value and the valor of friendship. How many were the poems inscribed to Stedman by brother poets, how many of their books were dedicated to him! Glimpses only, into this intimate cosy retreat are permitted: The following was written as another stanza to "The Old Picture Dealer," in Mr. Samuel P. Avery's copy of "Songs and Ballads," published in 1884, for the members of the Book Fellows' Club:

And yet—and yet might time decree
That Avery should my fame restore,
That hovering shade would smile to see
His Virgin shrined as ne'er before!
Then, for one votary at my throne,
The world would worship in his stead,
And with its proffered gold atone
For long neglect through centuries sped.

William Sharp's verses are memorable:

To E. C. S. on his Fifty-seventh Birthday, 8th October, 1890

Unknown, unlaurell'd, but with heart
Athrob with the poetic fire
I touch, with loving hands, for thee
My wildwood lyre.

About me the great pinetrees sound
With sea-blown echoes from below;
Far down the fretful tides and waves
Surge to and fro;

Beyond, the great sea lies; and far
Across horizons undescried
I fain would see your face once more,
Stand by your side:

But no, dear friend, the dim decrees
That mould the clay of men prevail—
Thou there, I here, must parted be—
Confused the trail!

Yet friendship, reverence, and esteem
Can make the distance but a span,
And love and memory transcend
Fate's cumbrous plan.

Thou there, I here, not severed are:
Once more your welcoming hand I grasp—
Not all the sundering seas that be
Can break the clasp!

All hail to thee, true friend and dear!
Already thine the bay's renown,
But long may sweeter roses deck
The laurel crown!

As also the reply:

To William Sharp

A dread voice from the mountain cried to me
Even as I woke this daybreak—*Thou art old!*
But then thy swift song answered dauntlessly,
"'Tis Love, not Age, that hath thee in his hold."
—O minstrel dear, O friend with heart of gold
And hand of leal, and voice of music free,
This day I crest with thanks each billow rolled
To Scotia's shores across our northern sea!

E. C. S.

Kelp Rock
October 8, 1890.

In a volume of "The Poetical Works of Edmund Clarence Stedman," Household Edition, given to his little friend Robin Mackaye by Mr. Stedman, in 1904, the following inscription on the flyleaf is written in Mr. Stedman's handwriting:

October 8th 1904

Dear Robin—of the princely mien
Art's pilgrims to the Old World know—
You came upon this modern scene
But just a star of years ago,—

Came in that mellow day o' the year
Which scores my own so distant birth
That you by thirteen lustra clear
Outhold me in your lease of Earth!
Thus much shall be your gladsome life
Than mine serener and more sage,
Surcharged with love, unvexed by strife,
From childhood to the Golden Age!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.
b. October 8th 1833.

to
Robin MacKaye
a poet's son
b. October 8th 1899

To which the answer was:

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN *from* ROBIN MACKAYE

(*Pater mihi scripsit.*)

Dear Mr. Stedman, when my "Star of Years"
Shall shine like yours a noble galaxy,
Wherein the upturned eyes of men may see
A tranquil light, that burns beyond their tears
(Albeit not illustrious appears
As yet my baby horoscope), for me
Our common festival a spur shall be
To raise my thoughts to yours as meek compeers.
And when, on many a future natal day,
Fond hands shall trim my festal cake, and some
Shall place an extra candle, to acclaim
The coming year,—then, smiling, I will say:
"That one is *his*—my guardian poet's-flame;
His light shines ever for the years to come."

Others are:

On one of Miss Field's departures from the West to the Atlantic seacoast again, Mr. Stedman rivalled Thomas Hood's celebration of his fair Inez by writing to Kate Field on a post card:

O, saw ye not fair Kate?
She's going to the East,
To take from out our loaf of cake,
Its most etheral yeast!

To Henry Holt:

Alack, the swift years will not tarry,
But you and I outlast them still,—
For why? 'tis this—I'll tell ye, Harry—
Good honest blood makes strong the will!

To bend *your* thews is not so easy:
You tried and toughened them at Yale;—
Long life! If e'er the sheriff seize ye,
All signing here will go your bail.

E. C. S.

And he was not mindful only of the famous:

My darling little queen of queens,
At last you enter on your *'teens*,
No more a child,—henceforth a maid
Scorning the toys with which you played.
No longer can your elders kiss
Your face, but now must call you "Miss,"
Bind up the brown locks waving down
And lengthen out your Sunday gown.
If I were not the busiest man
That ever felt the writer's ban,
I'd send you better rhymes (or worse)
Than this swift-written doggerel verse;
But, as it is, a message quick
To you, my dear and only chick:
Be just as merry as of yore
And still more loving than before,
But grow in goodness with your 'teens
And you shall still be queen of queens—
Not queen of Diamonds, bright and cold,
(For vainly with *them* women old

Strive to outshine Youth's artless arts!)
But be our sweet, good *Queen of Hearts*.
To Laura,
from her t'other grandsire
E. C. S.

From "Books of Association of Lawrence and Eleanor Hutton": "The new matter (in 'Victorian Anthology'), pages 307–308 of this second edition, is due to Mr. Hutton's Review of the first edition in *Harper's Magazine*, a printed copy of which is pasted on the back cover. Original autograph poem of the author, referring to these emendations, inserted:"

Viola! dear Hutton,
You pressed the button—
We do the rest!
In this edition
Sins of omission
Are all confest:
To other picken's
We've added Dickens;
"The Ivy Green"
Hath its demesne;
—In Adam's fall,
We sinned all,
There's no perfection
Can scape correction,
But of all my sponsors
You are the best.
March 4th 1896. E. C. S.

And in "Poets of America":
"To Lawrence Hutton,—this humbler 'Literary Landmark,'—from his friend, E. C. Stedman—1885."
On the verso of this leaf ("Songs and Ballads"), original lines by the author, and in his autograph:

To Laurence Hutton, Amicus.

Wherever under the sun I wander,
The while I work my songs I ponder,

And seek to find a comrade true—
As Larry Hutton, staunch and true;
Nor have I, Larry, any misgiving
That Life, with Friendship, 's not worth living,
Though it be toilsome,—Friend, have you?
And I sing before I take my rest,
In every life three things are best,
Three things are best in every land—
Love, and work, and a Comrade's hand!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

New York April 25th 1887.

Yes, he had faults,—"a temper," for instance, and was sometimes too quick to say sharp hurting things, certainly not meant to be so, and often explainable and forgivable because of a keen sense of humor misunderstood, or of an over-irritated or over-wearied nervous system. In such cases his "explosions" were followed by a deep sense of remorse, even by tears, and he begged for pity and forgiveness, because he was "a sick man who could not control himself when he was free from the objective control of the world and its demands." A quip he thought innocent, if wounding, would be atoned for in different ways. For instance:

Whatever language may have passed between us, in the heat of this morning's discussion, your letter does the highest credit to your character and feelings, and I am more than glad to receive it in the spirit in which it is written.

It is not my nature to nurse an unfriendly spirit, or to enjoy a quarrel even with those who have not my respect, and certainly I never heretofore have entertained any but the highest opinion of your head and heart.

I was particularly sorry to find myself in an altercation with you, when I afterward bethought myself of a letter received from you during my recent troubles.

At the same time, a man is bound to take notice of certain epithets. I realize that the one you used was due to a slip of the tongue and am glad that no one overheard it.

On my own part, I wish to say that I did not *mean* to declare that you never had spoken to me except on . . . Possibly I did say so, and if I did I am very glad to retract it.

Let all things be between us as heretofore, as the sun has "not gone down upon our wrath."

Stedman was no less anxious to bring harmony between friends, and was habitually a peacemaker, wishing little differences to be forgotten in the wide bond of comradeship. He had a rare and sensitive intuition of another's point of view, of another's individual or peculiar disposition, or pet foible, which he respected. Whereas his vivid personality was apt to dominate those around him, and he knew intensely his own opinion on every point and subject, in the end he desired absolute freedom for every one. As Colonel Church has said, "critical in his tastes but most generous and kindly in his judgments, as all know, he had pity and feeling for his fellow men, and he showed it at all times and under all circumstances." He tried to secure a pardon for a convicted burglar caught in his house. Indeed, Stedman loyally defended those whom he loved. He was not blind to faults in others, but they did not seem to him of importance beside the redeeming virtues. Tried beyond endurance, he was ready to forgive and to blot out the past injury. For instance in 1896 a note in his diary reads: "Sat beside ———; he surprised me by saying he is head of the new ——— ——— ———, which steals my own name and good will, and probably will stop my last bit of income. He was obviously embarrassed, but I tried to let it pass by." It seemed to hurt him to criticise a friend, and after an outspoken statement, he invariably made for what he felt was a breach of loyalty, some direct or indirect atonement. There was no upbraiding of a friend who stole his ideas and rushed into print with them ahead of Stedman, but he learned caution, in time—for instance:

By the way, speaking of your architect friends, may I venture to give you a bit of an old stager's experience? *I* have learned to

beware of my "intimate friends." Of all others, they are the ones to whom I do *not* show my unpublished writings. Time after time I have seen them *borrowed from*, in advance, by brother authors to whom I have read them. An Eastern princess never unbuckles her girdle until the wedding night. Great is the wisdom of the Orient! . . .

He often returned to publishers part or all of the money sent him in payment for poems or articles, claiming that he had been overpaid. He shrank from any rift in his lute of friendship, persisting long in trying to bring friendship back to those whom he loved, but who had become estranged. He esteemed tolerance, justice, magnanimity, and he had a swift contempt for anyone displaying a lack of these characteristics. A hundred incidents illustrate his freedom from vanity and self-advertising,—e. g., a diary-entry: "Wrote ——— ———. Disgusted with his advertisement of me as that odious prig, 'The Dean of American Letters.'" His trust was child-like and impulsive, until he had been deceived, and then if the person had qualities which he admired, he would replace his confidence, always believing that the good and attractive would finally conquer.

He was, perhaps, prone, so much he liked to talk, so overrunning was he with ideas, to monopolize the conversation. He talked to his servants about their lives; to the child, or to you, he talked of the things which would most interest, and if no other listener was at hand he would talk to his favorite cat which was constantly on his writing-table. His kindness to animals could not make him renounce fishing: he wrote a remonstrating friend, once, as follows:

Confidentially: Elder Knapp never excited more Remorse in the heart of an awakened sinner than you have in mine. I never shall shoot (or try to shoot) another deer, unless I see the buckhorn high above its forehead. And as for hunting with dogs, down the runways and across the lakes,—never, never!

But there's nothing cruel in trout-fishing. Trout *love* to be caught—by me. Besides, the does devour their own young.

In his home-life and among familiar associates, Mr. Stedman spoke of himself as "E. C.," and rather liked to be so called by others. His love of details and his mastery of them was constant, perhaps sometimes extreme. If friends, e. g., had been invited to dinner, he planned every minutest arrangement, supervised the cooking, the setting of the table, chose the dishes, decorations, etc., with great interest and pride, was delighted if things turned out as desired, and was too intensely chagrined if there was a slightest failure. If he had wished blue flowers to be used he was greatly vexed if those of any other color came. The accidental or haphazard was not permitted; the logical, artistic, systematic, was demanded. A theoretic necessity ruled, or a hidden law of coordination, which alone made the harmony and perfection that to another might appear somewhat fantastic. This tendency led him habitually to seek, at least, to throw the art of living into dramatic shape, and in this Play he himself, and others concerned, must act their parts according to the demands of a more or less clear plot. On rare occasions this imperious ordering of circumstance, together with the inner, *March, March!* were flung aside and lost in some sudden bit of boyish holidaying, or theater-going, in which Care was thrown to the dogs, and Jollity was put in charge. But usually his mind seemed driven onward by a sort of inner fatalism, and this whether awake or asleep. When tired or not deeply preoccupied by critical or creative work he was prone to reiterate and reëmphasize some often-urged advice, as, "You must go on the Stage," "You should marry," "It is wrong for you to smoke cigarettes," "You should dress thus, and thus," "Your health, your health!" "Why do you eat that and that?" An idea became easily "fixed" with him, so that with the other necessity of uttering his thought or feeling, he sometimes was chargeable with "lecturing" his friend or assistant, to advise reprovingly, etc. Occasionally the trend took the form of reciting long passages from a favorite poet.

Sea-stories, tales of adventure, even the "comic supple-

ment," were read with avidity. He had an almost uncanny intelligence to see through, about, and above his subject. Kindness and sympathy guided his criticism; there was always something to admire and praise, and often, love; animadversion if suggested, was with a light and passing touch. But that searching glance failed not to see dishonor. He would not publicly show his feeling, he could not thus wound, but a few knew well that he thought ——— a snob, a "climber," morbidly avid for a place in the public eye; that ——— was an ignoramus, his erudition a sham, his imagination stolen, etc. Once, only, there was a frank limit to his tolerance: despite all the letters of introduction, despite all appeal, he was thoroughly discourteous, and would have nothing to do with Wilde, and refused to receive him at his house.

Sometimes Stedman's quick temper, or his nervous irritability, would momentarily estrange guests or friends, but if anyone suggested a thought which presented the "funny side" of the controversy, Stedman's ready laughter would instantly clear the frown from his mobile face. In early days, Bayard Taylor would often employ this gentle weapon of defense when, at times, he, Stoddard, and Stedman, waxed too warm in disputing some literary question. The cool irony of Stoddard would irritate Stedman; then Taylor would good-naturedly say "Come, come, boys, you make me think of ———," following with a story full of humorous significance. His son Arthur, when a little fellow, realizing this characteristic, would avert his father's serious displeasure over some childish wrongdoing by making some pert and pertinent reply. Once, when the lad had had a savage little battle with another boy, his father rebuked him sharply, reminding Arthur that as "the son of his father" he should respect his social position, and also asked him *why* he should so lose his temper: "Because I *am* the 'son of my father,'" replied the little diplomat, which amused Mr. Stedman, and the boy went unpunished.

His own laughter bubbled over the most serious things,

as for example, having been, as he said, deprived of sleeping in the grand best bed all his life, he vowed in his last illness that he would have the satisfaction, finally, of dying on it. And he did! The flat at 2643 Broadway was at this time called "The Wayside Inn." Another illustration that solemnity did not matter:

I am seriously disturbed by your information with respect to the Academy of Music.

There certainly would be a general disappointment, on the part of any audience that might listen to my lectures in that building. I could make a political harangue there, or, perhaps, deliver an *oratorical* discourse on a subject of great public interest. But I can't imagine a place more unfit to read a series of University lectures on a delicate and ideal subject.

These lectures of mine are not of a "popular" and Bob-Ingersollian nature. They are the essays of a student, requiring to be read without oratorical effect, and often depend on their subtility and quiet grace for their effect.

What could be more absurd than to shout out, with a stage voice, in a great auditorium, delicate passages from the most refined poets!

Tom Hood's conception of the fellow roaring through a speaking-trumpet,

"I have a *silent* sorrow here!"

would be realized, I fear.

I don't think, you see, that my lectures would be effective to an audience of more than "1200" people, and I am quite doubtful whether they would in any case edify or interest a great "popular" throng, changing from day to day.

In 1885 Mrs. Anna Bowman Dodd published in the *Critic*, a sympathetic and withal exact article on Stedman, extracts from which may be conveniently added here:

Either by nature, or through force of circumstances, he is the typical literary man of the day. He is the man of his epoch, of his moment—of the very latest moment. There is that in his personality which gives him the air of constantly pressing the electric button which puts him in relation with the civilized activities of the world. He was born man of the world as well as

poet, with that sensitive response to his age and surroundings which has enabled him to touch the life of the day at many divergent points of contact. He owes it to an equally rare endowment, to his talent for leading two quite separate lives, that he has been enabled to maintain his social life free from the influences of his career as an active business man. The broker is a separate and distinct person from the writer and poet. The two, it is true, meet as one, on friendly terms, on the street or at the Club. But the man of Wall Street is entertained with scant courtesy within the four walls of the poet's house.

Once within these, Mr. Stedman's true life begins. It is an ardent, productive, intellectual life, only to be intruded upon with impunity by the insistent demands of his social instincts. Mr. Stedman has the genius of goodfellowship. His delight in men is only second to his delight in books. How he has found time for the dispensing of his numerous duties as host and friend. . . .

As a talker Mr. Stedman possesses the first and highest of qualities—that of spontaneity. The thought leaps at a bound into expression. So rapid is the flow of ideas, and so fluent its delivery, that one thought sometimes trips on the heels of the next. His talk, in its range, its variety, and the multiplicity of subjects touched upon, even more, perhaps, than his work, is an unconscious betrayal of his many-sided life. The critic, the poet, the man of business and the man of the world, the lover of nature, and the keen observer of the social machinery of life, each by turn takes the ascendant. The whole, woven together by a brilliant tissue of short, epigrammatic, trenchant sentences, abounding in good things one longs to remember and quote, forms a most picturesque and dazzling ensemble. Added to the brilliancy, there is a genial glow of humor, and such an ardor and enthusiasm in his capacity for admiration, as complete Mr. Stedman's equipment as a man and a conversationalist. He would not be a poet, did he not see his fellow-man aureoled with a halo. His natural attitude toward life and men is an almost boyish belief and delight in their being admirable. It is only on discovering they are otherwise, that the critic appears to soften the disappointment by the rigors of analysis. Stedman is by nature an enthusiast. He owes it to his training that he is a critic. As an enthusiast he has the fervor, the intensity, the exaltation, which belong to the believer and the lover of all things true and good and beautiful. He is as generous as he is

ardent, and his gift of praising is not to be counted as among the least of his qualities. But the critic comes in to temper the ardor, to weigh the value, and to test the capacity. And thus it is found that there are two men in Mr. Stedman, one of whom appears to be perpetually in pursuit of the other, and never quite to overtake him. . . .

The range of Mr. Stedman's acquaintance among backwoodsmen and seafaring men is in proportion to the extent of his journeyings. "There are at least a hundred men with whom I am intimate who don't dream I have ever written a line," I once overheard him say in the midst of a story he was telling of the drolleries of some forest guide who was among his "intimates." This talent for companionship with classes of men removed from his own social orbit has given Stedman that breadth of sympathy and that sure vision in the fields of observation which make his critical work so unusual. He knows men as a naturalist knows the kingdom of animal life. He can thus analyze and classify, not only the writer but the man, for he holds the key to a right comprehension of character by virtue of his own plastic sensibility. His delight in getting near to men who are at polaric distances from him socially, makes him impatient of those whom so-called culture has removed to Alpine heights from which to view their fellow-beings. "There's so and so," he once said in speaking of a second-rate poet whose verses were æsthetic sighs to the south wind and the daffodil; "he thinks of nothing but rhyming love and dove. I wonder what he would make out of a man—a friend of mine, for instance, in the Maine woods, a creature as big as Hercules, with a heart to match his strength. I should like to see what he would make of him." Stedman's own personality is infused with a raciness and a warmth peculiar to men who have the power of freshening their own lives by that system of wholesome renewal called human contact. Much of the secret of his social charm comes from his delight in and ready companionship with all conditions of men.[1]

To J. G. Holland in 1877 this letter:

. . . Finally: you make a subtle and most original distinction between the continuous aroma of a nature such as Longfellow's,

[1] [The men of the Life-saving Station at Jaffrey Point, New Castle, knew well his friendship. He gave them 100 books for winter-reading.]

and the intermittent quality of whatever fragrance is mine. The acuteness and entire justice of this distinction are striking, even to myself, and I say so with a sorrow that would be remorse—were it not that I seek for a partial absolution, at least, in the necessities and fatalities wherein my life has been involved. I have had none of Longfellow's rest and "wherewithal," nor, until I was thirty did I ever know people who lived in "sweetness and light." Like yourself, I had to grope my way, and hammer out my own salvation. It has only been by giving up the common pleasures of a scholar's life,—even those of *reading* and æsthetic enjoyment,—that I have been able to add anything, however little, to the sum of what adds to the culture of others. The *practice of a cultured life* I have had to forswear altogether; occasionally, at stolen moments, I can grope like a burglar into the palace where Lowell, Longfellow, Tennyson, always *dwell*, seize a few treasures which seem to belong to *me*, and leave the moment my errand is done. These restrictions of course wear upon one, and make him seem rude, *crabbed*, out of tune and harsh. But judge the poet only by his song. Rest assured he would make his life also a song, if circumstances and duty did not utterly forbid.

You know what it is to be hurt by misunderstanding, and it is this sorest of all hurts which you never inflict yourself. I don't remember ever being annoyed by mere criticism of my writings; but Professor ——— of Chicago, has recently made a gratuitous criticism of my *life*, full of inaccuracies and misunderstanding, which really has *hurt* me—in a tender place. I wonder if he thinks it is from choice and avarice that my time for writing is so restricted, that even my necessary letters (which take precedence) are never cleared away so that I can say—"Now let us do something worth while." By and by I hope to see what this new poem of yours may be—the title struck me at once.

The Manual of the Authors Club, 1909, contains a Memorial notice of Stedman, of which this is the last paragraph:

This is not the place for an estimate of Mr. Stedman's work as poet and critic, but it may not be amiss to say that as time goes on his contributions in both fields are likely to be accorded a high place in American literature. His oratory had force, polish, humor, and scholarship, and a collection of his occasional speeches would have distinction, and much more value than that given to them

by the event. A man of strong and even settled convictions, he yet had no formula for progress, but was open-minded, candid, and liberal. His personal sympathies knew no bounds and he gave himself, by dint of great sacrifices, and with generosity and courtesy, to the demands and needs of others. Knowing, from experience, the stimulus and value of encouragement, he was quick to recognize talent wherever he saw it, and showed a knightly gallantry in urging the merits of writers whom he admired. Beyond all he had the poet's heart, that never waited for a second call to help. There is hardly a member of this Club who has not been the beneficiary of his kindness, and his death puts his survivors of the writing fraternity under bonds to see that his loss to the art he loved is minimized by our devotion to his noble ideals.

Stedman was a literary man and art-lover, certainly book-lover, but not a bibliophile as the word is usually understood. For rarities, uniques, fine bindings, and all that, he cared not, or little. Nevertheless, by his will, the Library of his beloved Yale has been given about a hundred volumes of now rare editions he had gathered for the preparation of his incomplete translation of the Sicilian Idyllists. Some seven thousand most valuable books were left his heirs, First Editions, Presentation Copies, Books of Association, etc., mostly with autograph letters, and inscriptions of the writers, inserted. Among these are about fourteen hundred volumes of American Poets, a unique collection which should be kept unbroken for use by a future historian of American literature.

While in the Tropics Stedman received a letter from a clergyman whom he had never met, but who had heard that Stedman might next day attend the Service at his Church. It was a crude thing, its spirit of bigotry and tyranny illy concealed. Stedman's prompt reply one hopes, perhaps vainly, was just a trifle disconcerting:

Your note reaches me this morning. With many thanks for the invitation and remembrance I feel it due to my wife and myself

that I should make an explanation. Let me assure you that many Americans, when travelling, (and in spite of the examples portrayed in Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad"), have sufficient *tact*, if not sufficient *reverence*, to seriously observe such forms and methods as belong to any service in which they voluntarily participate.

For myself, I never have found any sincere form of worship in which I could not devoutly join; and am confident that neither in a cathedral, a chapel, or a mosque, should I feel myself other than a humble worshipper with my fellow men, according to their tastes and precedents.

My father was an Episcopalian. Bishop Coxe, the widely known author of the Sacred Ballads, is my cousin. My sister has married the son of Bishop Kip. In many ways your church is dear to my family and associations, and within one of its temples I always feel especially at home and reverential. But I do not avail myself of your catholic invitation to the Holy Feast, as I am not a member of any denomination.

With renewed thanks for your courtesies, spiritual and temporal, I pray you to believe me, Reverend and dear sir,

Your very humble, though unworthy, servant. . . .

To another who wrote in a somewhat similar spirit, he said: "My faith is quite broad enough to *include* yours. My idea of God, and the modern world's idea of God, enlarged by His wonderful *revelations* in recent times, is I think, loftier and broader, and more truly *religious*, than the Hebraic man-*Godism* of our very ignorant forefathers. It has at all events, taught me to believe that there are many ways leading to Him, and to believe that He has still more wonderful revelations to make to mankind, and—not to worry about and question the 'faith' of others. When my heterodoxy makes me a bad man, it will be quite in order for you to apply your remedy. Meantime, 'by their fruits' is not a bad text."

Stedman was happy in teaching his sons to lisp their evening prayers.

"Religious but not creedbound" was his answer to a third inquirer. He consented that he was "a Unitarian." Sug-

gestive was his word to a frank pessimist, "Like the nightingale (of the poets) you set your breast against the thorn (of pessimism) and discourse all the more sweetly. Were I young, I would be a pessimist, but life's afternoon has too many ills for me to consent to acknowledge them!"

To the Reverend F. H. T. Horsfield, in 1892, he wrote:

I was brought up among my mother's kindred, in the family of a down-East Congregational deacon, and was from my earliest recollection in revolt, instinctively, against the cruel and rigid Calvinistic theology. In mature years, I was attracted to the radical wing of the Unitarians, simply because I found *freedom* there, and a desire for "more light," and I was a regular attendant at Mr. Frothingham's services, as long as he preached in this city.

My father's family was Episcopalian, and my *instincts* are in favor of the Church against all other orthodox establishments. I well remember the thrill of emotion which I had when first entering an ivied Gothic Episcopal Church, with its "dim religious light," its traditions, its brotherhood, its wonderful service, etc.

In New York at a farewell gathering to his pastor, Reverend O. B. Frothingham, Stedman spoke, in part, as follows:

In listening to Mr. Curtis, and hearing his delicately veiled doubt of the belief of many of the orthodox classes in their own expressions, the thought came to my mind that he received a different bringing up from my own. In fact, the early age at which he found himself at Brook Farm shows that this must have been the case. I was trained in the family of a Puritan of the strictest sort. We were allowed to read no books on Sunday except the Bible, Sunday-school books, and two works which did much mischief unawares—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Those were supposed to be sound, and, indeed, their theology is sufficiently dismal.

But the mental stimulus they afforded served to cultivate the imagination, and did not prevent me from thinking for myself. In our region people seriously believed in condemnation after death, and went around with gloomy faces in that faith. This I never could understand; my whole nature was antagonistic to such creeds. It was my instinct to believe in what was beautiful, and

I could see nothing beautiful in the Deity that we were instructed to adore. But I led a busy life, and wandered around, and was scarcely aware that any one in this great city believed as I did. I felt almost like a heathen in this town, and rarely went to church at all. One day I picked up a mutilated heading of one of Mr. Frothingham's sermons, and found that here was a man who taught liberty of thought, who at least gave me the liberty to think as I chose. . . .

Mr. Kinney told me that he once said to Mr. Greeley, "Do you know what Charles King's opinion of you is—what he considers your chief characteristic?" Mr. Greeley said: "Well, I don't know. What does Charles say?" "He says, Mr. Greeley, that your chief characteristic is hatred of a gentleman." Mr. Greeley scratched his head and said: "Well, Charles is about right. Gentlemen are generally oppressors of the poor, and I guess I do hate them." Now that is not the kind of a gentleman that we have in mind. It is true that Mr. Frothingham is a man who, by early training, and by descent loves a church, loves a cowl; he likes that which is old and venerable and beautiful, that which is built by the hands of artistic and cultured men, and over which time has run its ivy. Such is his nature. But he is radical by conviction, and he says that the truest and most lasting beauty, the beauty of the future, is that which must be founded on truth. And he has been able to lead many to share this conviction with him, among whom I count myself one of the humblest.

These quotations need no comment, and illuminate Stedman's faithfulness and obedience to the inner voice:

I most sincerely and humbly feel that no one is in more need of forgiveness and mercy, of the aid of a higher Power, than my erring and struggling self. As for prayer, what is the best of us but

> An infant crying in the night,
> And with no language but a cry?

Mrs. Cheever's story, or sketch, certainly is very dramatic and affective. There is no gainsaying the fact that even an agnostic with a saintly mother, would shrink from having her any the less a saint. This speculative age is a trying one. As Mary said at the Sepulchre—"They have taken away my Lord and I know not

where they have laid him!" But you must do me justice; throughout my writings I am constantly saying that the want of some sort of *Faith* is killing to modern art and poetry. Yet I have no fear that things will not come out right in the end. I believe in a Supreme Power that works for Righteousness, and all this is in the order of His law of progress to some higher knowledge and reverence than we have yet experienced.

Yes, my dear friend, you of all men have the *right* to search my own heart, and to ask of my belief and feelings. I have not the strength, the time, to put such things on paper; but I am glad that I have seemed to you reverent concerning religious beliefs and observances. A vital and assured faith seems to me the greatest treasure that one can possess. I would as soon take a human life, as to endeavor to deprive a human being of that spiritual possession. For this reason I never speak to one, who has faith, of my own doubts and difficulties.

Nothing ever delights me more than the simple faith of a loving heart. All religions, all lookings up to the Good God who made us and cherishes us all, are good and lovable.

From a newspaper clipping:

My friends wished to consult Tolstoi about a personal matter. When the little conference seemed nearly over I rejoined them. "I cannot advise you," he was saying. "If you are to teach others, it must be done unconsciously." He laid great stress on this word. "By example?" some one asked. "Yes, by example. Live according to the law of Jesus Christ—that of love between man and man." "How do you regard Christ?" "As a man—I could not narrow my religious conception by believing otherwise. Some German has written a book to prove that Christ never existed. I was asked what I thought about it, and I replied that it was probably untrue, but that it did not matter to me at all whether He existed. His teaching exists, and is the revelation of God." "You do not mean that it is an exclusive revelation?" "Oh, no," said Tolstoi, "I believe that revelation still goes on, that all great spirits have been the channels for revelation and that all religions have this in common. But the Christian revelation seems to me to be the highest yet given to the world. We cannot tell what God is. *We cannot even say whether there be one God or many gods.*"

Mr. Stedman's note upon this in his own hand was:

P. S. by E. C. S.—I have spoken of men as being *gods* (in "Nature of Poetry"). Doubtless there are within the "visible universe" of our starry heavens beings so eminently superior—in substance, intelligence, innate creative power—to ourselves as in various attributes to approach our human conception of God: not, of course, in the infinite and universality which would belong to a God who should include them all. One such being may have *our* solar system for his province. Yes, and have other almost deific Beings as subordinates.

B. Taylor gets at this in his *Masque of the Gods*—only, he assumes The Traditional Unknowable God beyond them all. I think this poetical, sublime, but less so than an assumption that He includes them all, and that they are portions of Him—witting or unwitting.

One can say nothing to his dearest friend, under such a grief as yours—the chance and change of the Universe must go on, and doubtless is best for the *whole*,—but how tragic for the individual! It seems as if all the matter and forces of the starry heavens united to teach each one of us his infinite littleness, helplessness, temporality;—and yet each of us certainly is the centre of the whole mass, so far as his poor little share of pain and pleasure is concerned. The Greeks, the Orientals, long since gave up the struggle; *we* still ask and hope and speculate,—but there still is no answer.

We get nothing out of life but the sense of humanity.

Speaking of Turgénieff, I am glad to see that—in spite of all this human tragedy (or Human Comedy, as Balzac puts it,) you are no more a pessimist than I am. Nor do I think the Russian was; he simply and faithfully reflects the blankness, terror, darkly dramatic quality of Russian life at present—of the race there, and of Russia herself, her steppes and lonely habitations.

I am reaching the age when men, who have had griefs and struggles and long experiences, find their hearts somewhat indurated. Their own scars are a kind of armor against more suffering, and often, I suspect in my own case, against over-sensibility. But I have not become so numb as not to be very deeply interested in your recent letter, and touched by the poems of your friend Miss Tilley—which you have so loyally gathered together, and which, by the unfaltering law of life and death and change, are all that

is left of one who plainly had a very exquisite sense of beauty, and a pure woman's soul. Brave as brave could be, moreover. And that is the thing which makes the most fragile of us victors, after all. She had the glory of her courage and her pride. It is the one compensation which defies pain, restriction of natural joys and rights,—it does this even when Death is to end all, and nowadays the more nobly, since the shield of the old-time Faith no longer protects us.

The new Faith, in time, will have the reality which only comes from being trained in it from childhood, and its consolation will last: for it will convince its possessor that we are not called into being to be extinguished . . . that we are not to be thus defrauded. That for a human soul to survive—to go on—to find somewhere, in your own words, "the white light of the stars" and meet its loved again—to have all the poverty and pain and service allowed for—it will find that this is an essential part of the simple "order of Nature."

Meantime, *you* have discovered, as I have been taught long since, that our only nepenthe is courage, our only lethe the diversion from our griefs and wants afforded by what we can do for the griefs and wants of others feebler than ourselves.

I find myself quite in accord with your view of man's true and spiritual *rapport* with Nature—and this in spite of the reaction setting in, and the talk in England about the "pathetic fallacy" with which Wordsworth has imbued his generation and our own. After all, Nature remains the one unfailing consoler and invigorator of the baffled but still sensitive and aspiring mortal.

I have been reading—several times—it will bear it—your beautiful poem in the February *Atlantic*. Yes: it is just as well that some of us should cling to what the age of science has termed the "pathetic fallacy." Perhaps feeling is, after all, truer as well as "deeper than all thought." Perhaps Earth herself has a soul.

I receive your letter with pleasure, and *Ecce Filius* has also come—for which, accept my thanks. As you are a classmate, I write, you see, at once, in spite of the scores of letters on my table neglected during a "snarl" of work in which I am just now entangled. And I shall read your volume before reading many others now awaiting their turns. The introductory matter interests me,

with respect to the humanity of Jesus, his pre-existence, etc. Individually, I always have thought him the Son of God—and the most perfect of men. But then I think *all* men also the sons of God: that we all have a portion in us of Divinity—are, perhaps, even creators. Well, I am glad, since you have written a theological book, that you have ideas of your own in it, and I shall try to see what they are.

To Anna Bowman Dodd.

January 22, 1885.

My dear Friend, I suppose that when great shocks come, suddenly rousing one from the quiet routine of life that is almost as sensationless as sleep, the soul must take its first impressions by degrees—to have them painless. And that friend is anything but a comforter, who too quickly intrudes words and images upon a nature suddenly awakened and laid bare,—who subjects to fresh vibrations the sensitive spirit—"all eye, all ear." And so, until you might be somewhat wonted to the new light in which you walk, unshielded and unshaded by those who have guarded your whole life thus far, I have not ventured to see you—or even to write to you.

But when, on the morning of the funeral, I saw your father and mother lying side by side in all the wonderful peace and beauty and stateliness of their suddenly perfected marriage, I said to myself that it was an incomparable sight.—

"Here was a royal fellowship of death"!

Such a sight it is not given to many to see even once; and no one, having seen the like, can ever desire to forget it. Nature so often fails of any consummation that realizes our dream of the fitness of things. From such a dream, however, rise the works of poets and artists. And thus you see, in old-world chapels, the sculptured effigies of grand old knights and their wives placed side by side, couched above their sepulchres. In your rooms, that morning, Nature seemed to have taken a lesson from the ideals of man—her own child and master!

There is nothing tragical or pathetic,—there is everything beautiful and compensatory, in such an ending to the lives of your father and mother. But what a loss to you! Ah, yes, my friend, I know all that,—and my heart goes out to you accordingly. The

love and strength of a husband came to you, again by the fitness of things, just in due time. Your own nature, so wrought in fineness and strength, will do all the rest for you. Meantime you are wrapt about with the affection and sympathy of many who are in your debt for both these attributes,—and among whom none more feelingly than your very faithful friend. . . .

. . . You see that I instinctively wrote "May," instead of March, for the season becomes brighter as I think of you: the songs and impulses of my lost Youth revibrate for an instant. But, pshaw! to us poets the fountain-heads of youth are always close at hand; our souls quaff at pleasure—as for our bodies, we have learned that we can get along without them.

Still, it is a kind of night-fall, when the body of one we idolize suddenly falls away into the elements—and the soul no longer is to our mortal sight "a visible apparition." (That is what Coleridge says each *mortal* person is—that we are *all* simply "ghosts," i. e., that our *bodies* are but the "visible apparitions" of our souls.) And so I have suffered keenly the departure of my beautiful mother. She *was* beautiful as ever, dead, covered with her favorite violets, with the look of youth come back to her. I think you never met her? She was an exquisite creature; a born poet, yet a woman from head to foot.

For myself, I still am what Lincoln called "a round peg in a square hole." My circumstances, pursuits, surroundings, are a perpetual discord; but "A Troubled Heart"—so far as speculative and religious enquiry is concerned—I never have had; since fourteen years of age I have believed that a knowledge of the *truth* about the *one* great question—that of immortality—will only come to earth-dwellers, if at all, in some far future stage of race-development. If a nature like mine *could* have any "faith," or yield to any authority, I probably should be a Catholic—i. e., I should accept the oldest authority and the most consistent traditions. Doubtless I am susceptible to the poetic and sensuous charm of the ivied Church, as you yourself, but my *reason* always keeps me from enjoying my *tastes*.—I quite envy you, who so naturally shift the burden of your soul to others' shoulders. As for "A Troubled Heart," which I have read, it seems to me quite flawless, from the literary point of view,—as both a record and propagandist of "Ecstatic" or religious exaltation. And I can think of

no more charming and tranquilizing life than the one you have found at Notre Dame. . . .

1907—Tuesday, 4 June. This day, returning with Hon. Stewart L. Woodford from Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, where we both had attended the funeral services of Elizabeth White, a noble woman—"The Muse of Sympathy," as Dr. Hillis called her—we conversed upon life, death, immortality. I spoke to Mr. Woodford of the indifference to personal survival manifested (*possibly affected*) by the third generation—of ———'s positivist ("O may I join the choir invisible") views and feelings—of the Shintoism, one may call it, adopted by the youngsters. General Woodford, (aged seventy-two next September) laid his hand on me and said earnestly: "I would be willing to suffer any torment—if it were purifying and exalting—for ages, if assured that I should thereafter survive and have a loftier career—at all events, exist as an individual. *I* wish personal and separate continuance—I do not wish to be absorbed, even,—to become, even, a part of the universal divine Spirit."

I share his feelings [and think the young indifferents are, (or pose as?) little monsters].

In a despondent mood, four years before his death, Stedman wrote the following concerning Immortality:

When very ill, as of recent years, I have realized how nature—early or late—takes one in hand. If late, so much the more cynically and determinedly. "Come!" she cries, "you have lasted too long! Your place is needed. You are defying my eternal flux and change,—you desecrate the order of things!" Then she begins to batter us,

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It is not Death that a brave man fears; it is Obliteration. (E. C. S. To begin a chapter with)

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rudely or playfully at first, according to her whim, as some empress of the jungle sports with her quivering prey. Soon, a cuff that means business, that blackens the flesh, draws blood, stifles the breath. If she throws one aside, and goes about her other concerns, we revive, we pick ourselves together, we flatter ourselves that we have found mercy; that it will be long before she will again menace her own handiwork—her offspring. With or

without a warning, she comes back: "What, still here! Is it aught to me that your work is all unfinished—that the best part of it is not even begun—that the rarest gifts I gave you, circumstances and time have not permitted you to utilize at all—that so much will be lost to your fellows by your extinction! Do you not see that nothing is lost—that no one is more or less, or of the least account? Am I not infinite? Did you not hear me? Your place is needed, I said. You are needed, too,—but only for resolution into the stuff from which I eternally mould." With that, more battering and pounding and stifling—knock-down after knock-down, parry and dodge as you may. As a peasant beldame pounds her hemp into flax, as the smithy melts old iron—once so beautifully wrought and precious—and forms it into fillets for reshape hereafter, as the potter kneads his clay,—so resolute, so implacable, the unnatural Mother from whose matrix we came so few the years ago. Happy those to whom she gave the least resisting power. To the few endowed with more of her vitality, she comes a third time, a fourth, again and again, till she has her will of them. One by one their defences fail, and with them the wish to defend gives out. Worn, wan and wasted, crushed to a jelly,—her only mercy is the numbness which she grants to the nerves—the insensate weakening of the will,—the sleep and syncope that becomes a desire,—the submission to the Inevitable that makes the traveller indifferent, after the second shake given him in the fangs of the beast that has sprung upon him by his camp fire.

You *think* you cannot leave your love, the wife of your bosom, the children of your loins, your art, your vocation—but, at moments, absolutely alone with the *elemental*—as on ship's deck at sunrise of a gray day, midocean, alone—or on a mountain top—or stretch of sky and marsh or prairie—or confronting stars in solitude, there comes that sense of the nothingness of *things*, work, even of *humanities*, love, friends—and knowledge that soul could slough it all off, leave it forever, and be at one with the infinite from which it sprung; *but, not* to be of it, part of it, but *with* it, drawing eternal vigor and *more individuality* from its infinite essence.

As for this question of continued personality, I have somewhat changed my views as modern experiment and knowledge have

increased. Revelation has been a myth, and no traveller has returned; but it *may* be that our human race, *through the advances of science*, will yet discover that its differentiations are enduring beyond its corporal dissolution. It may be that every planet, revolving around whatever sun, is to learn at *some stage* of *its evolution*,—when ripe enough to be fitted for the discovery,—the secrets of a spiritual existence, of personal endurance after bodily death.

From the last note-book three excerpts may be added:

Three of the greatest poets and sages of the Nineteenth Century, at least, were nobly satisfied and hopeful as to the main question: Emerson, Tennyson, and Browning eminently, of the three, though Tennyson had to argue himself into optimism: teste, "In Memoriam."

Despite the metaphysicians and Idealists I am one of them who believe that Space is, and is infinite; that there would be space—i. e. *room* to hold "matter," and for things to move in, whether or no any consciousness existed to recognize it, and whether or no there might exist any matter or might be any motion. In the infinity, then, of space, there floats an unlimited Universe, or one so vast—we can't premise its illimitability—that it is absurd to measure the importance of a man of this our Earth by what may be his relative rank in the cosmical scale. The greatest and most glorious of cosmic creatures is no greater as compared with the Universe itself. The smallest may put in his equal claim to citizenship and continuance—if separate continuance be possible.

It is trite to say, what *all* live to learn, that our *wisdom* comes (despite our "knowledge") only through suffering. But what irony that it should be forced upon us most of all, in successive draughts, with steadily increasing mercilessness, in old age, just when it can serve us naught.

The foregoing quotations concerning immortality and things metaphysical throw into relief Mr. Stedman's predominant characteristic,—personality. So intense was this coloration that it extended beyond all the placings and influences of his life, stimulating his friendliness and sympathies. More noteworthy still, it made the choice of his

themes and the method of their treatment in poetry. Concrete, individual, personal,—all! A close study of his critical tastes and judgments as regards the poetry of others, makes manifest the same point of view. He had less interest in Wordsworth, Goethe, Arnold, and others whose inspiration sprang from sources beyond the individual. Likewise in economic and social affairs: of pathetic self-sacrificing kindness to individuals, communal philanthropies and social reforms were nevertheless scarcely noticed. Questions of Philosophy and Science seemed outside his concern, and in religion his beliefs and disbeliefs were doubtless governed by the same preference for the personal. What an irony of fate it is that it was a personal, an individual thing, the peculiar cause of his ill-health, which balked and crippled his personal happiness, his personal valuation, his genius indeed, his more splendidly possible greatness and power as a world-guide and helper. All of this is revealed, at least by implication, in the following letter to H. M. Alden:

I am making some resolutions begotten of despair. For ten years I have been engaged upon work rarely of my own choosing—the ten best years of a rapidly waning life. I used to be a poet, with a faculty perhaps not great—but still specific: with one little gift differing from other people's little gifts! I hoped to exercise it more fully and frequently. I had ideas for poems, tales, dramas, ideal sketches. But for years I have been doing work not "specific," and which many others can do in the same way. The worst of it is that it has made me so many acquaintances and correspondents that I am compelled to waste *all* my time—time that would otherwise earn me a *living*—in seeing people, or writing them letters, or writing that I can't write to them and can't read their Mss. and books! Now, what woful slavery and waste is life under such circumstances!

I am going to fill existing contracts and to *stop right there*, and I expect friends like you to aid me in this design. Everything and everybody conspire to make me a lecturer, preacher, teacher, essayist, didactic figure-head,—just what I am not of nature, and don't wish to be. There comes to-day a tall college President, with a black stock and gold spectacles, asking me to make the "Ad-

dress" conferring his Commencement degrees. Am I, in truth, such a portentous Philistine?

What I *wish* to do is to write some spirited and imaginative poems, some dramatic and passionate sketches, for *Harper's Monthly*.

You are a superb editor. You outline clearly and suggestively the paper you would inspire me to produce. Yes: I possibly could write "a most interesting article on the New York of my *time*." Yes, and still more probably I shall not do it—unless you and I live beyond our creative and into our reminiscential periods. *Pas si bête!*

Curiously, I receive this week a letter *worded almost like yours*, from the editor of a forthcoming work on the America of to-day.

I rejoice to find your purely ideal and most beautiful "God in His World" everywhere, and to learn that it is so steadily widening its territory. *There* is a book which *you* were sent into the world to write, and you have written it. It is inspired, and is to become an inspired "classic." I am reading it for the second time, and indeed have read many portions many times. And why? For I cannot say that I understand it, nor do I fully understand Thomas à Kempis or Jeremy Taylor. Possibly I do not care to understand it. More likely I do not read it with anointed eyes. But its strength, its music, it symphonic harmonies of both language and feeling, its marvellous renaissance of some faraway perfection of English speech and style,—finally, its absolute sweetness of divinely human spirituality,—all these, in our untranquil perturbed estate, are a joy, a rest, a consolation. I, who so long have known you, seem to catch some true glimpse of you for the first time. I am with gratefulness and increased respect, albeit with a sense of my own unworthiness, your old friend.

The things he instinctively considered, and through life preserved as most holy were, the love of his Mother, Duty, his financial honor, his genius or literary ideal, and his love of noble poetry and literature. His life and letters throng with proofs. At expense of life-force and other aims, for instance, he kept his "boyish vow that the sole of his Laura's foot should never touch rough ground." Illustrative also is one of many such acts: at "Watch Night" of the Authors

Club, in 1906, Stedman had said a misquotation had been made by one of the speakers. Finding that he himself had been in error he at once sent a letter acknowledging his own error, and followed it up at the next Watch Night—a few weeks before his death—by frank and handsome public acknowledgment. Sometimes he was, perhaps, too sensitive, explaining how a line in some poem seemed to be derived from another poet, the imitation being wholly unconscious.

Re the Beecher-Tilton case, as has been shown, he opposed bravely the unjust assumption, without legal proof, despite Tilton's character, manners, and morals, that Tilton was guilty, saying: "I have studied general laws, and observed affairs, to little advantage if I have not learned that sooner or later it would be followed by a doubly horrible exposure and retribution on all parties concerned. The rule is inevitable—inflexible. I am not like you, a member of an orthodox society,—am not a Calvinist; but I believe in God, in a quiet way, and that no great wrong can work a right." His influence changed the editorial policy of the *Tribune* in this regard. And what an amazing demonstration of the soundness of his appeal came later in the Dreyfus case!

. . . Therefore,—although no Yale man of letters has had cause, during my memory, to feel anything but sorrow and discouragement over Yale's persistent contempt for *literature* and neglect of her literary men,—in spite of all this, and of the fact that all her confidence and her honors are bestowed upon politicians and millionaires, I have felt deeply chagrined and embarrassed by the fact that I simply *have not been* able to make a contribution to the gymnasium.

My dear Morris, You see that your letter finds me in New York —doubtless the only local author whom you know still imprisoned (as our dear Keats would put it) in black purgatorial rails. (I never took in the force of that line until I stood beside Leicester's superbly grated tomb, St. Mary's Church, Warwick.) The meaning of a line that I had known from youth instantly flashed across my mind.—Alas: who shall write us another "Eve of St. Agnes" —anything half so *thrilling* with its beauty of the young poet's

soul!—Well, we can do our best, at all events; at least, you can, and must, while still young and blooded, and more free from the myriad responsibilities that will increase with years.

As once upon a previous time, a gentleman took the impecunious poet up into a high mountain and showed him—the Lecture Bureau, and wealth. This was the answer:

As to the proposed readings—the *time* required is nothing; but for the service, even if I inclined to it, I have not the requisite "cheek."

The spectacle of a bevy of authors, exhibiting themselves on a stage, for the delectation of the sympathetic or fashionable women of New York, and for the increment of the fund to aid the "Guild," will be a sight for gods and—women.

When I do make a platform debut in this Philistine city,—which for thirty years has "stoned the prophets and persecuted them that were sent," it will be at my own time, for my own purposes, and in my own way. From many a request of the kind, (such as the Poe Readings) I used to buy myself off with a contribution of far more money value than my obscure poems, but am now too impoverished to escape in that way.

It is all right for ——— and ———, etc., they are professional public men and caterers—I am simply a retired, hard-working, and just now perplexed and distressed man of letters. In my present dilemma I can go nowhere, do nothing—except struggle for mere existence. Consider me *hors de concours* and *hors de combat.*

His innate honor came to expression even at college: "I shall act honorably, which is more than I can say of my rivals." In business it was the same; even when not obligated by law or agreement to pay he wrote: "You will receive no dividend, but I hold myself your debtor for the sum, and shall pay it when on my feet again." And not only in business, but in the making of poetry! He began early to scorn writing for popularity's sake, through "cockney rhymes and sentiments," but "by writing in accordance with my knowledge of the truth and painting visions not revealed to all;"—one may smile at the ebulliency of the words, but

not at the emotion behind them. He soon bettered the expression in pursuing as his aim "Earnest, thought-freighted song." It was always his pride that, "though at college wild he had never been vicious," and one who knew him intimately said "he had a noble modesty and as strong a pride." It is pathetic to know how his unselfish service to Literature increased his suffering; one small illustration:—He often served as Judge in Collegiate, Intercollegiate, and other Prize Contests. A diary-note reads: "Wrote Higginson my decision in the Intercollegiate Literary Contest. Have read twelve essays of 6000 words each. Nearly killed me." Despite the authorization, almost the necessity, to be subjective because of ill-health and misfortune, he was usually splendidly objective in his creative work, and often with unexcelled aloofness and poise. "Everything except duty is subordinated to my literary ends and these ends have never been changed through labor, sickness, sorrow, and success. My friends and Mother often doubt for me, and dispirit me as much as is in their power" (1862). It is remarkable that these notes of disappointment and belief in failure were not more frequently heard, so high had been his aim, despite his success which to him seemed so small in comparison:

> I receive an order from my publishers to complete and issue the Greek translation, year laid by. I fain would accept it. I see all the beauty and delight of the work—yes, and no one can do it but myself—but, my ——— is upon me; I cannot act—my time is exhausted—I must go with all my back work undone, and misjudged by friend and foe alike.

As a critic his aim was not to find fault, or deny, or depreciate—not even the worthless or blameworthy, but to understand, explain, to praise the good, and to love the lovable. Beyond questioning he established literary criticism upon a new basis and by a new method. He illustrated in a novel way, Temple's maxim, "A man of the world amongst men of letters, a man of letters amongst men of the world;" and

he set an exemplary and needed stamp of disapproval upon Disraeli's definition of the critics: "Men who have failed in literature and art." More excellently true was the dictum of Holmes upon Stedman: "The author whom the critics honor, and the critic whom the authors respect."

To one author Stedman wrote:

In yesterday's *Critic* I find a brief review of your volume, which I don't hesitate to pronounce inadequate as to length and opinion. It has the vital defect of pointing out minute feelings (as the reviewer deems them) and not taking in and transmitting the general spirit of your labors. But you will find, when you shall have issued the second volume, that the completed work will be duly comprehended and will take its proper hold, etc., place.

Of his own work and life, he wrote a younger fellow-poet:

All this time, you see how artfully I have avoided the true purport of this letter, which I can't refrain from writing—even with my astigmatized eyes—and that is, of course, to thank you, fair young Sir, for your passing kind paper upon my long ago lyrics. I am indeed touched by your thus going out of your way,—by your making a point to express your knowledge of, and liking for, some of the many songs of my youth—some of the few of my middle years. It is true that I was a *lyric* poet, naturally, if anything, even as a child. And about the time I was ready to do something larger than song-making, as I thought, prose-work and trouble came in the way.—You show that extreme kindness bred in one who, even for friendship's sake, reads carefully the verse of any real poet. But I have done nothing—nothing—in view of what I meant to do; and it really gives me a feeling of sadness to find anything said nowadays of my poems—so long ago "collected." And what you say seems strange to me. Fifteen years ago my songs were everywhere, and I was only known by them! Now I'm a mere critic, and editor of a compilation. Well, 'tis good to confront a mirror now and then, even if it begets remorse, and even if—as in the case of your kind, affectionate article—it throws back a too flattering image.

His ultimate aim in creative work and also in criticism was to secure and to know the popular verdict. "The in-

stinct of the world is unerring" was his characteristic saying. Paul Elmer More spoke the true word when he said, "Before we can have an American Literature we must have an American Criticism." It is the belief of many that Stedman leastwise laid the foundation and well illustrated the undertaking. Certainly no other has so well covered the field. There may scarcely be better histories than his nobly conceived and splendidly edited volumes on the modern English and American poets, the *Anthologies*, the *Nature and Elements of Poetry*, *A Library of American Literature*, etc. All of his twenty-seven volumes reveal a synthetic scheme of service to American letters.

To instruct, directly, Stedman well knew was not of his nature: "The truth is, and I say it in perfect seriousness, that my whole capricious nature is by instinct, and through faulty training, the reverse of *didactical*. I have written careful books of criticism, because certain beautiful things and topics I have understood intuitively—and afterwards learned and stated something of their laws. But this has been the only instruction of which I am capable, and I have got through with it. I should not know how to teach or address a primary school."

But as the best critics do not criticise, so, presumably, they teach best who are not *ex officio*, teachers. And, one might add, they also sing who only stand and hear the song.

A chapter on technique would be of use showing his method of work, his universalism as well as his particularism and attention to detail, his demand for exact words and verification, the minute comparing, revision, recomparing, —Accuracy, Accuracy, and again Accuracy! To take a single illustration:

The first English Edition of "Victorian Poets," *With the Manuscript of the Essay on* "Robert Browning" inserted. This manuscript consists of forty-one pages, with four extra pages of condensed notes. It is unsigned, and bears evidence of careful revision on every page. Many additional notes have been pinned or pasted to various pages and it is written

on both sides of many sheets making altogether 78 pp., 8vo. The sheet of notes is not the least interesting part of the manuscript showing that Mr. Stedman thoroughly reviewed the subject before beginning to write his essay, which he divided first into "Three Main Points: 1. Dramatic; 2. Expression; 3. Morals;" and then developed each division, in brief notes, in the most thorough and workmanlike manner.

"I *have* accepted a Reception to myself for December 6, [1900] at the Authors Club, whether it kill or cure! What egotists we are! Well, it is the first in my whole life, and, like the Marryatt baby, such a little one,—and I sail for the West Indies right after it," so wrote their modest guest to a friend some days before the occasion of the Authors Club Reception to Mr. Stedman, "appropriate to the completion of his set of books on British and American poetry."

Although Stedman had persistently retreated from public honors, believing that what he had accomplished was scant in comparison with that which his soul demanded; and although he had so often assisted at or initiated receptions to colleagues and friends that he felt as if he were "occupying the other man's place," the reception lovingly tendered was a deep gratification to him.

Among the tributes was a poem written by James Whitcomb Riley on a fly-leaf of a book:

It is a various tribute you command,
O Poet-seer and World-sage in one!
The scholar greets you; and the student; and
The stoic—and his visionary son:
The painter harvesting with quiet eye
Your features; and the sculptor, dreaming, too,
A classic marble figure, lifted high
Where Fame's immortal ones are waiting you.

The man of letters, with his wistful face;
The grizzled scientist; the young A. B.;
The true historian, of force and grace;
The orator, of pure simplicity;

The journalist—the editor likewise;
The young war-correspondent; and the old
War-seasoned general, with sagging eyes
And nerve and hand of steel and heart of gold.

The serious humorist; the blithe divine;
The lawyer, with that twinkling look he wears;
The bleak-faced man in the dramatic line;
The social lion—and the bulls and bears:
These—these, and more, O favored guest of all,
Have known your benefactions, and are led
To pay their worldly homage and to call
Down Heaven's blessings on your honored head.

Ideal, to the utmost plea of art—
As real, to labor's most exacting need,—
Your dual services of soul and heart
Enrich the world alike in dream and deed:
For you have brought to us, from out the mine
Delved out by genius in scholastic soil,
The blended treasures of a wealth divine,—
Your peerless gift of song—your life of toil.

And, among other things, his beloved friend William Winter said:

The wild ardor of youth is chastened and sobered as years drift away, but, if once it has been felt, the emotion of delight in the achievement of poetic genius is never quite extinguished. No realm of memory yields so much to comfort the heart and cheer the mind as the realm that is peopled with the Poets of the Past—that realm to which your honored guest, throwing wide the portals of song, has made the avenue of access so easy and so pleasant for the generations that are to follow him, and in which he will forever remain a noble and an honored figure. From "Bohemia" to "The Blameless Prince," from "Old Brown" to "The Heart of New England," from the unique, romantic, and tender ballad of "Montagu" to the wild and pathetic rhapsody of "The Lord's-Day Gale," from the Bryant ode to the gossamer, lace-like, exquisite loveliness of "The Carib Sea," from "Alice of Mon-

mouth," with its wonderful, triumphant dirge,—to the inspired and beautiful "Ariel" that commemorates Shelley, the same pure poetic thought and feeling flow steadily onward, and the same golden music sounds,—the music of a noble mind and a passionate and tender heart, by nature consecrated to the service of beauty, and, therefore to the supreme welfare of mankind. The Poet is not and must not be a teacher. He does not know, and he need not ask, in what way his spirit affects the world. Longfellow has told you that he found his wandering song in the heart of a friend. Emerson has told you that the sexton, ringing his church bell, knows not that the great Napoleon, far off among the Alps, has reined up his horse and paused to listen. The songs of the poets are sifted into the minds of men as the sunshine is sifted into the trees of the forest. In that way the Muse of Stedman has become a loved companion to thousands of responsive souls; in that way his influence has wrought and his solid fame has grown. I sometimes think that the deadliest foe of creative impulse in poetry is the faculty of criticism, and that our poetic literature will never, as a whole, acquire the opulent vitality, bloom, and color of Old English poetry until our authors cease to be self-conscious and critical, and—as that rare poet, Richard Henry Stoddard, so often and so happily has done—yield themselves fully to their emotions. But the faculty of criticism, as Stedman used it, becomes creative. Never have I found, in any of his pages, a narrow doctrine or a blighting word. Genius, he has said, is something that comes without effort and yet impels its possessor to heroic labor. No better word was ever said of it, nor was ever a better example given of it than this which now we contemplate and acclaim, in the splendid fruition of his inspired, laborious, and grandly faithful life.

Mr. Winter's beautiful tribute closed with this *Coronal:*

Comrade and friend! what tribute shall I render?
Roses and lilies bloom no more for me,
And naught remains of Fancy's squandered splendor,
Save marish flowers that fringe the sombre sea.

But were each word a rose, each thought a blessing,
Each prayer a coronal of gems divine,
Honor and love and perfect trust confessing,
My words, my thoughts, my prayers should all be thine

For thou hast kept the faith: thy soul, undaunted,
Whatever storms might round thee rage and roll,
By one celestial passion still enchanted,
Has held its course right onward to its goal.

No sordid aim, no worldly greed, beguiling,
Could ever wile thy constant heart astray;
No vine-clad, Circean, Cyprian Muses, smiling,
Allure thy footsteps down the primrose way.

Thou hast not basely gathered thrift with fawning,
Nor worn a laurel that thou hast not won;
But, in thy zenith hour as in thy dawning,
The good thy nature willed thy hand has done.

On thy calm front the waves of trouble, broken,
Have backward surged and left thee regnant still;
Nor tempests of the soul, nor griefs unspoken,
Have e'er had power to shake thy steadfast will.

Thy glory cannot wane,—for were thy singing
Stilled at its source, through all the domes of fame,
In one great organ burst, superbly ringing,
The whole poetic choir would chant thy name!

Thy soul is music: from its deeps o'erflowing,—
With the glad freedom of the wild-bird's wing,
Where icy gales o'er sunlit seas are blowing,—
It sings because divinely born to sing.

No stain is on thy banner: grandly streaming,
Its diamond whiteness leads the tuneful host,
Forever in the front of honor beaming,
And they that know thee best must love thee most.

So rest: thy regal throne thou hast ascended:
The standards blaze, the golden trumpets ring,
And in one voice our loyal hearts are blended—
God bless the Poet and God save the King!

An extract from Moncure D. Conway's tribute:

There are some men that cannot be repeated. You may have another Longfellow, another Lowell, another Whittier, but not another Wordsworth: Since Darwin's revelation of the predatory method of nature there can never arise another passionate lover of nature like Wordsworth. You can never have another Carlyle nor another Emerson: the conjunctions that molded them cannot recur. And now let me say to you writers of the younger generation—There sits Edmund Clarence Stedman: take a good look at him; for when he goes you will never see him again. New needs will come, new workers, but the place he occupied, the task he finely achieved, these are uniquely his own, and he has not left them for others.

As I have sat here listening to the speeches, and especially to the impressive words of Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Winter, they recalled an incident in ancient Athens,—While Socrates was talking to his friends in the Poplar Grove, one of them cried out, "O Socrates, it is a sufficient end of existence to listen to these discourses of thine!"

And I will venture to say to Clarence Stedman that to my mind it is a sufficient end of an author's existence to have listened to these appreciations of his work by competent judges, and these tributes of affection poured from the hearts that have long surrounded him and best known him.

Among the letters read were those from John Hay, H. M. Alden, W. D. Howells, H. W. Mabie, Henry van Dyke, John La Farge. His old comrade, Charles H. Webb, sent a humorous letter and a poem:

My dear George Cary Eggleston:

I sincerely regret that one of those colds that come suddenly and chronically upon even the warmest-hearted of my sex, will interfere to prevent my attending the complimentary dinner to the never late Mr. Stedman,—to whom, however, my compliments.

But if an anecdote not unconnected with the Guest of the Evening be in order, I may say that in the late war,—not the Spanish nor the Philippine one, but that in which you so successfully and swiftly bore a flag to the rear,—in that war, I say, I rode with the

present Guest of the Evening through your loved but at that time vexed Virginia. That is to say, he rode—I walked.

(Had you, Sir, actually been in command, of the Confederate Army, instead of writing dispatches to the newspapers saying you were, I am sure instead of riding *through* we should have got no further than what the Town Crier of Nantucket called in his crying "Molasses Junction.")

On the way the Guest of the Evening shot hens under the impression they were pullets, which we jointly ate,—it being impossible to disjoint them.

He also held up an attenuated and venerable farmer, whom we met, for ten pounds of tobacco, after smilingly remarking to him that we smoked. This plunder he divided into two equal portions —afterwards taking mine from my pockets, as I slept. Also a number of jokes—then fresh—which Arthur has more or less successfully experimented with ever since.

I also take the liberty of enclosing a few thoughtful and well considered verses that I have written in moments snatched from my duties as Consul General to the Gravelly Islands and General Corrector of the biographical notes in the last and newest American Anthology.

If the allusions to age seem likely to hurt the feelings of anyone else—especially of you, my dear sir,—who are no George Cary Chicken—omit them please by special request?

As for the feelings of the Guest of the Evening, it is not needful to at all heed them—it seldom is on these festive and commemorative occasions. The only good feeling I remember at his hands, is his feeling with both for my tobacco in that long ago Virginia day —or rather night. But a fellow feeling like that doesn't make one wondrous kind.

With the sincerest sympathy and respects, I remain, my dear sir,

Yours very faithfully,
CHARLES HENRY WEBB.

TO THE GUEST OF THE EVENING

Dear Edmund, when I count the years,
That over us have rolled,
It seems to me I must be young—
And only thou art old:

For, still a private in the ranks,
  At best, I close the rear;
Whilst thou, bestarred, dost ride in front—
  A mounted Brigadier.

So with our speech, while thine ran free
  As water laced with wine,
Mine showed a slight impediment
  None ever found in thine.
It seemed that thou on horseback wast,
  And by thy side I walked—
Though when the monologue was done
  I thought that I had talked.

Ah, dearest friend and poet best
  Of all who woo the muse,
I am not envious, but I'd like
  To stand there in thy shoes
While all this mighty guild press round
  With words of love and praise—
None baying at thy heels, but all
  Circling thy brow with bays.

And well they may, for hast thou not
  Been generous to them;
To each extending the glad hand—
  And not thy garments hem?
See Howells and Morse—without the Re—
  Old men and wondering why
Thou stretchest too the helping hand
  To youngsters such as I!

I'll tell them why the helping hand,
  And why the words of cheer
Even to those who cannot write—
  Thou canst not help it, dear.
'Tis just as Mr. Watts remarks—
  Explaining of the Zoo,
Why lions and tigers growl and bite—
  It is thy nature to!

Thy nature to be kind to all,
  Women as well as men—
To see a Browning in a Bore,
  A pullet in a hen.
But blessings on thy frosty pow—
  Whatever "pow" may be—
And if this Authors Club stood wine,
  I'd drain a cup to thee.

But if one has a cat-boat, dear,
  Instead of a balloon—
Without some friendly slant of wind,
  He cannot make the moon.
So, while all other brows and ears
  With laurel thou dost twine—
Although they be less prominent;
  Oh, please remember mine!

And I will drink, when I get where
  There's something good to drink
Instead of stuff as thin as though
  Each author brought his ink—
A cup to him who from his heart
  Pours Poesy's choicest wine,
And as a critic never wrote—
  Or thought—one unkind line.

CHAS. HENRY WEBB.

Mr. Stedman's oldest and most honored friend—the white-haired minstrel, Richard Henry Stoddard, in fine words of praise recalled the early days of their first meeting, concluding:

Such was Edmund Clarence Stedman when I first made his acquaintance, and learned to know him as poet and man. I have known him, we have all known him since in other individual and intellectual characters, as a critic of poets and poetry, as editor of a great library of National literature, as a collector of English and American anthologies, and so on. But for me, while he commands my respect for the judgment, the scholarship, the industry, which the preparation of these works imposed upon him, I prefer to think

of him, and care most for him, as the poet Stedman. He is one of the few, the very few, American poets who have written blank verse, not merely good, melodious blank verse, but harmonious, stately, majestic blank verse, which I take to be the highest achievement, the crowning glory, the imperishable monument of whatever is greatest in English poetry. He possesses another poetic gift which no other poet, American or English, ever possessed to the same extent, or with the same command of felicitous versatilities, of the gift of smiles and tears, of a humor which is pathetic, of a pathos which is humorous, and the rare gift of wedding both, of making them "one and indivisible" in an indissoluble and everlasting union.

Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Authors Club, I propose the health of the poet Stedman. Be good enough, therefore, to imagine me standing up sturdily here with a flagon in my hands and something bibulous in the flagon. Edmund Clarence Stedman! Not good health to him, but better health; not happiness, but more happiness, and not long life, but the longest of all possible lives! May he live as long as he wants to, for, however long it may be, it would not outlive our admiration and affection!

To William Winter.

December 13, 1900.

My dearest Winter, How rare, how beautiful, how endearing, your speech and poem—all for the sake of your lifelong comrade—and how proud I was for myself, and *of* my friend and poet, as I found those columns in the *Tribune*. In fact, you saved the day for me, as they apparently had no proper stenographic arrangements.

My stateroom had been taken on the Bermuda steamer (Saturday, 15th) before that thing came off, and I have been throughout nearly killed by the pressure of closing up affairs, and scores of letters, etc., in order to get away for a four weeks' change—as ordered to complete my recovery. (My first respite in seven years.) So until this P. M. I have not been able to write you, and am marvelling over the increasing strength that has carried me through the past ten days. We have moved "to town" for the season, and I mean and hope to see something of you after January 15th. With love, gratitude, and honor. . . .

I prize the Manuscript beyond words.

To Charles Henry Webb.

December 13, 1900.

. . . Not until to-day have I been *able* to write you the letter wished to write at once—no, I can't write *that* now—but I will ot sail without sending you these words of love, gratitude, and dmiration. How you rose to our almost lifelong alliance—how ou made the wittiest, dearest, brightest, of the ballads which ear your touch and none others! How you did all this, in spite f all my blunders and misdeeds. Dear old Charley, born humorist nd poet and man of humor and feeling,—indeed, indeed I'll never forget it, and you can't make me angry, or make me cease o love you, under any circumstances that the Djinn may try to ex us with. I was happy to see you there—among all our youngsters—and the letter and poem were enough to make the evening all I could desire.

To John Hay.

December 15, 1900.

My dearest Hay: I am sailing for "the vexed Bermoothes" today, but first a "stirrup cup" with you, though the Black Charger be a steamship.

Just to say how proud and gratified I was made, by your letter to the Authors Club. The Ms. is mine, and a life-possession.

I see there is a ministerial "crisis," and am sure you will do just the right thing. Yet I know your fine proud nature: be sensitive, yet not too sensitive. You are the one statesman whom *I know* to be both aspiring and—a patriot to the finger-tips, and I have bet on you, and have known the ship was safe, from the moment you took the helm. In the end the world will say, as I have for some time past, that you are our greatest diplomat since —the building of the *old* State Department.

One of the most salient characteristics of Stedman was saliency itself, a readiness, spring, *verve;*—"such energy, always vital and outspringing," said an observant friend; "a flashing sword of sensibility—keen, resolute, rustless and unsheathed; one can scarcely conceive even the grave as its scabbard," writes MacKaye. His judgments, estimates and resolves were formed, and if need be, struck

into words or acts, with lightning rapidity. The Ameri canism of the Yankee boy was exemplified in his willingness to tackle anything, with immediate and surprising expertness and mastery. A dozen callings pursued consecutively o even synchronously gave him no difficulty. He seemed never to have served an apprenticeship at any expert calling o task, but at once took his place, as of right, as a master workman. The astonishing ripeness of his financial judg ment is shown by his quoted letter of 1857. He also heard that inner voice which commanded, "March, March!" His spirit itself urged *Action, Action!* and his poems for the most part spring from the same eagerness and energy, and few are so perfect as the ones which exhibit those qualities. To a correspondent Stedman wrote, in 1893, "I shall read with peculiar interest the 'Conquest of Mexico,' since I once, in my youth, devoted a whole Summer to composing a blank-verse poem upon an episode of the wonderful cam paigns of Hernando Cortez." Speaking of "Morgan," Alden said, "We love to have our blood tingle with the old fire,'" and J. H. Boner wrote: "Now I've seen 'Morgan.' A poem is *good* when it makes a fellow want to grab his quill and write another—instanter. The charm of your poems is their 'individuality'—the reflection of your own personality. *You* are Pan, Lucifer, Aaron Burr—yea, thou art Harry Mor gan the Buccaneer."

Stedman's writing, whether in little or in the large, gives one the impression of great knowledge, the distillation of vast reading, but he was not, in the usual meaning, a great reader. The explanation lies in the fact that in reading and the acquirement of knowledge he had a characteristic precision and celerity in "tearing the heart out of a book," and getting at the essentials of the matter. Even this would not have sufficed had it not been for a memory of most exceptional accuracy. Once, only, so far as known, did it fail him in quoting.

"The trouble is, now," he wrote in his last note-book, "not that there is a dearth of poetry—fine poetry—but that,

n the modern rush and surplusage of life, we do not *feel* oetry as we did. Does anyone absorb and feel—and feel gain and again—any recent poetry as we absorbed and elt, say, Matthew Arnold's 'Second Edition,' so new and trange in 1856, which slowly grew upon our very spirit? he 'Quietist' is now gone utterly. We are all riding like he Wild Huntsman."

Sharp called Stedman a "silver-haired youth," and more han one admired his "pluck, and patience, and cheerful- ess under most discouraging external circumstances." "Are ou ever really seriously and painfully depressed?" "Noth- ng but the accident of ill-health," said Bayard Taylor, has prevented you from paying an income tax of $1000. a ear. In your love of work and devotion to your art you and are very much alike: your *vivida vis* constantly reminds me f my own—but you have a power of resolution and abnega- ion which I do not possess. I could not possibly, by force f will, hold the faculty in abeyance, as you do."

"My memory of Stedman," writes Percy MacKaye, "is hat of a white-haired, vigilant-eyed, eager youth. Though e was in his seventies when I first met him, it was impossible o classify him as an 'old man,' with any of the usual conno- ations of that term. Indeed, to spend an hour in his close ompanionship was to be reanimated with the vigor, the nthusiasm, the impressionable receptivity of a young man's ision of life. Among my numerous poet friends—men and omen of half his years, or less,—he was perhaps, more han any, the sparkling boon comrade and adventurer."

And Julian Hawthorne said to him:

I always feel good after getting a letter from you: there is an mmortal vitality in you, which would be permanently contagious, I could hear and see more of you. You make the sun shine rough January fogs, and the west wind blow right in the teeth f Eurus. Is it temperament, or is it Wall Street? I have had oughts of establishing a butcher-shop on the Avenue, so that I an have leisure to write and postpone publishing, in the intervals

of hacking out steaks and chops. Stocks are a sort of mixture c steak and chops, and I suppose they bring a similar freedom.

When looking at actually approaching death Stedma wrote the following letter:

Mr. George W. Smith, Secretary,
The Hundred Year Club,
143 Liberty Street,
New York City.

My dear Sir:

The prospectus of your quaint society is unique and interesting Mr. Denslow is an old and esteemed friend of mine, and his recom mendation also commands my respect.

However, I find your prospectus so esoteric that the public, a first sight, may be at a loss as to your purpose and method of pro cedure. But if you get the idea into our heads that length of yea can be promoted by membership, you will soon have to hire a ver large hall for your regular conclaves.

I have had some thought of becoming a christian scientis because the philosophers of that sect assure me that it is quit unnecessary to die, if you only make up your mind to that effec You do not seem to go quite so far, but hold out hopes of a hundre years under certain conditions. Now I was born to live a hundre years: it runs in my family. An uncle of mine lived to be ninety nine and ten months of age, and his sister lived to be ninety-si But my uncle did not write for a living. He never drank hc whiskeys, never smoked, and was in love but once in his life. No I have deliberately bartered probably a quarter of my predestine term for lifelong tobacco, unlimited grog, all-night work with th pen, all-day gambling, and a perennial series of flirtations. Ye I must have paid twenty-five years for these; and as Bret Harte hero said when he was stabbed for kissing a pretty girl: "It ha been worth the price!"

You see you should have caught me young. It is too late t avert my doom. The black steed is already at the door, but the words of the immortal Webster: "the past at least is secure

May you live a thousand years. . . .

P. S. Mrs. Wilcox's poem is really in her best vein,—a stron terse revolt against the hereditary doctrine, in this respect mo

original. Against it, however, I will give you Sir Walter Scott's view of the matter:

> "Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
> To all the sensual world proclaim:
> One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name."

The last memorandum of Stedman shows the daily engagements made with persons, at clubs, for official duties, etc., almost every day in January, 1908. The deleted ones include those of the 17th. He died on the 18th. Age usually wears men down to dotage and to "anecdotage"; severe, long, lifelong labor will usually stiffen and benumb both body and mind; sixty years of constant ill-health will, in the majority, wear out the heart, both the physical and psychical heart, and beget the bitterness of pessimism; misfortune and worry will at last also bring one to death well winded; the sensitive poetic temperament generally has the same result. Stedman's wonderful resisting powers were not conquered by all five interblended misfortunes.

"So soon as he could speak, he lisped in rhyme, and so soon as he could write, which was at the age of six years, he gave shape and measure to his dreams." *Nascitur non fit* is especially true of Stedman. To Poetry he was dedicate when the Fates wove the threads of his life. With his face as if just turned away to earth from the face of God in the burning bush, he would say, "O if you only knew how happy I am when I have been able to do *my* work," or, "They can't cheat us out of one thing—the divine joy and glory, the holy comfort of art-creation." And yet, and yet, the elder Fates, and their Poet too, were cheated by the stronger Fates of the Circumstance and the Accidents of his time and place, or else some tricksy fairy must have slipped into the woof an invisible slight limp thread of laughter and play. For his fellows would not listen to "earnest thought-freighted Song," and, Master of all arts that he was, he gave them what they could hear and love,—and, too, what they would pay

him for—"The Diamond Wedding," "Pan in Wall Street," "Morgan," and all that. Thenceforth and throughout the life appears and reappears the insatisfaction, the hurt, the wail of inability to realize his ideal! Strength and time, health more than all, could not be found to write that kind of poetry he longed to write, that of which he was conscious of power to write. "I transact business only to obtain the means of living." "Every true poet yearneth after the great heart of the people, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," he wrote at thirty; then, "I have more than once bartered a fortune and a name for perfect freedom of thought, time, and body;" in 1872—"I am tired of lyrics, and want to do some larger work;" later, "Eminence in the grand drama is the supreme eminence," but not to be now dreamed of. Stedman's supreme excellence was not, however high one place him, that of the creator of poetry, but was that of its historian, philosopher and appreciator. Had not business and ill-health prevented he could have been among the world's greatest poets; he had every gift required. He was the best historian of the best modern poetry,—and poetry, until now, is the very flower of the thought and feeling of the elder world. His services to literature, too, were doubled by many friendships and by the most self-sacrificing help and encouragement to other singers. He held it not his office to say: "Thou ailest here, and here," but, Thou excellest there, and there,—a more successful method of teaching, one suspects. Whether by singing or of singing, both by praise and criticism, he incited and abundantly illustrated the control and value of the trained intellect over the untrained imagination.

May each of his friends take, as if to himself, this, from a letter to Bayard Taylor:

> I wish to say that, of course, I always feel that perhaps I have had too little of the true art-faith—the willingness like Palissy's to let no human considerations, or common duties, loves or fear, prevent my absolute devotion to my *one calling*. But *you* know

that all my grosser life has been led solely with the effort to place myself where I may follow that calling nobly, independent of the passing popular mode, and at the same time do my duty by those whom, as a *man*, I am first bound to protect. You also know that physical weakness has compelled me often to rest, and retire from the fight; and has made it really impossible for me to live entirely by my pen—as I should have to do if I gave up business. You know that I have daily to *force* myself to the horribly distasteful money-fight. We are not our own masters. I can do nothing else than I am doing, and shall fight on till my succor comes. And if it never should come, you, at least, will have understood me rightly.

And, indeed, which of us is too old, what one too young, not to feel in his heart of hearts, that although health and wealth and even hope may come and go, though the eyes dim or the hand be stricken,—though friends may fail, and love be a memory,—more, though even that reputation, dear and fickle jade, after which we all at times have striven (because, as Landor confesses, there is something of Summer even in the hum of insects), though even that be not his help in time of trouble,—which of us toilers of the pen, if born with the art to write, does not know that at the last analysis, it is his love, his wealth, his religion, his solace, and that to it he must return, for better or worse, again and again, so long as breath is in him. So is it with all the arts, with every cult, that is come to man, as Dogberry said, by Nature. Yet among them all I, for one, know none other more sufficient and conpensating to its votaries, nor is it in their own volition to cease from its pursuit.[1]

At least I have obeyed at eve the voice obeyed at prime; the more so, as in this matter desire went hand in hand with duty. Strength wanes, passion long since flew, but the compulsive gift of youth stays by to the last. If I have been false to it through long stages of life, it was because there is a still higher law—that of protection for others, and honor among one's kind. I confess that I am not of the Scriptural (patriarchal) breed, that would slay or sacrifice those under my law or protection even at the com-

[1] This paragraph formed a part of Mr. Stedman's response at the Authors Club Reception, December 6, 1900.

mand of an Angel in the bush, the thicket or the cloud. Nor could I have been like Palissy, and let my children go in rags and untaught, etc. Nor like ——— and ——— who lived on fellow men revoked their pledges of honor, or taxed their associates for the maintenance and development of their own "genius" or mission. In such case, I would be disobedient to the most "heavenly" vision—yet I recognize that by so much the less I may have been specially commissioned.

These precious paragraphs are copied from two little slips of paper, entitled *Reminiscences*, found upon Stedman's desk after his death,—the very soul of his autobiography. The pathos of their hushed eloquence is heightened by the almost indecipherable cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd hand-writing of his last years. They tell of the wearied hand and heart, but clearer of the inner benediction when life and duty have been well done. "*Le monde matériel est Dieu mis en doute; gare à celui qui se laisse prendre*,"—and he had not been deceived. May one believe that, better than he knew, he did in truth obey the voice at eve which he obeyed at prime. As he at first held, it commanded poetry, "the painting of visions not revealed to all," "earnest, thought-freighted Song." Circumstance and an almost unique special ability dictated a somewhat different kind of singing, and the ideal, even in the lyric, was disallowed. As life wore along he saw the truth that the grand drama must be the ideal and the accomplishment of the greatest poets. The tragedy came in the impossibility of attempting this, no matter what might be the inner gifts and powers.

Neither is it well to avert one's eyes from the too-much truth in the old legal maxim, the too-much bitter, also, that *Nemo militans Deo implicetur secularibus negotiis*. None could dispute it better than Stedman, because none succeeded better, nay, none so nearly, in demonstrating its error by one striking example. But he certainly was not minded to do this, and for several sufficing reasons. He was not proud of the way he was compelled to make a living, and he renounced it whenever he might and so long as he could. Certainly, as the years wore on, the voice at eve

was not so mandatory as it had been at prime. Not his the blame, who had long wanted, needed, sought, even pleaded for, a post wherein a certain stipend for services rendered should have given him the freedom to be "God's Soldier." Those who refused to give him this freedom—he never blamed.

May it not have been that his tragedy was rendered more poignant by the half-vision of the sunrise of a greater truth, —"A new land calls for new song," he wrote—nay, did he not forefeel far sublimer songs preparing than any that may be sung with words alone,—the songs not of poetry only, but of Literature, the Song of the Friendship and the Brotherhood of Men, the Song of Science, the Song of Civilization itself? "Every true poet"—his words—"yearneth after the great heart of the people," and his superb intellect was rapidly coming to see that such new songs must be based upon a new counterpoint, and sung by a new race of singers, with a whole-world orchestra, the baton in the hand of Evolution, —the Audience most unlike those old warriors and lovers—songs not in the rhythms of metre and of rhyme, but in the harmonies of feeling, thought, action, and fact. If a cruel necessity prevented him from joining the Singers in this Festival of the New Atlantis, he was happy, and we fortunate, in his leading rôle of the perfect historian—might one say, biologist—of the last blooming of the Century-Plant of Poesy of all the elder centuries. More certainly was he a pathfinder and guide through the transition period to a newer world of poesy and imagination eagerly now throbbing to incarnation and reality.

"Bring no more flowers and books and precious things!
O speak no more of our beloved Art,
Of summer haunts,—melodious wanderings
In leafy refuge from this weary mart!
Surely such thoughts were dear unto my heart;
Now every word a newer sadness brings!
Thus oft some forest-bird, caged far apart
From verdurous freedom, droops his careless wings,

Nor craves for more than food from day to day;
So long bereft of wildwood joy and song,
Hopeless of all he dared to hope so long,
The music born within him dies away;
Even the song he loved becomes a pain,
Full-freighted with a yearning all in vain."

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LE COEUR
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89. The house that Vander built. [A Broad Street nursery tale.] *The Independent*, New York, Vol. 21, p. 3. November 18, 1869.

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90. The old admiral. *The Galaxy*, New York, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 51. January, 1870.

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The same. *Favorite Poems*, 1877, 1881. p. 11.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 43.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 162.

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Idyl I. *Abraham in Mamre.* 2 cols., p. 3, January 6, 1870.

Idyl II. *The expulsion of Hagar.* 2 cols., p. 3, February 3, 1870.

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92. Cuba. *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 23, 1870.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1873, 1884. p. 297.

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93. Ab astris. [Poem.] *The Galaxy*, New York, Vol. IX, No. 5, p. 609. May, 1870.

94. Crabbed age and youth. *Putnam's Magazine*, New York. New Series, Vol. VI, No. 23, p. 255. September, 1870.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 167.

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95. The party figure-head. [A Pre-Hoffmanite lyric after the "Blessed Damozel."] Anonymously in *New-York Daily Tribune*, p. 5, November 2, 1870.

96. Rip Van Winkle and his wonderful nap. [The Uncle Sam Series for American Children.] Illustrated in color. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1870. 8vo., paper, pp. 9.

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97. The songster [a midsummer carol]. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. II. p. 490. September, 1871.

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98. Tennyson and Theocritus. [Essay.] *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXVIII, No. 169, pp. 513–526. November, 1871.

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99. Review of "the book of the east and other poems," by R. H. Stoddard. *The World*, New York, November 3, 1871.

100. The flight of the birds. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. III, p. 142. December, 1871.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1873. p. 334; 1884. p. 372.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 97.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 376.

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101. Book-reviews [unsigned]. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, 1872.

102. Editorials [occasional]. *New-York Daily Tribune*, 1872.

103. The heart of New England. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXIX, No. 171, p. 34. January, 1872.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1873. p. 338; 1884. p. 376.

The same. *Favorite Poems*, 1877, 1881. p. 29.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 3.

The same. *Songs and Ballads*, 1884. p. 48.

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104. A town sermon [the Yule-tide homily at old St. Paul's]. Illustrated. *The City:* American News Company, New York, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 1. January, 1872.

105. Address at the Aldine Dinner to R. H. Stoddard. *The Aldine Dinner Supplement*, March 1, 1872.

106. Review of Bryant's Homer. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXIX, No. 175, pp. 619–624. May, 1872.

107. Gettysburg. Poem read at the annual meeting of the Army of the Potomac, Cleveland, Ohio, May 7, 1872.

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The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 60.

108. Old colony letters. *New-York Daily Tribune*, summer of 1872. I. The Massachusetts Shore, July 17, 1872. II. A Piscatorial Paradise, July 22, 1872. III. Marshfield, July 29, 1872. IV. Marshfield, August 2, 1872; V. Fruit from an Old Tree, August 9, 1872. VI. A Cruise in Cape Cod Bay, September 4, 1872.

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110. Victorian poets. [Essay.] *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. V, pp. 357–364. January, 1873.

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111. Stanzas for music [from an unfinished drama]. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. V, p. 571. March, 1873.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 91.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 376.

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The same [under new title]. Thou art mine! Set to music by Dudley Buck. Opus 79. New York: G. Schirmer. 1878.

112. The overture. [Poem.] *The Daily Graphic*, New York, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 1. March 4, 1873.

113. Sacking of New York. [Poem.] *The Daily Graphic*, New York, Vol. I, No. 1. March, 1873.

114. Hypatia. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. V, p. 746. April, 1873.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 50.

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115. Walter Savage Landor [a study]. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 49–62. May, 1873.

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116. Beyond the portals; a song of the outer world. Recited before the Literary Society of Dartmouth College, June 25, 1873.

The same. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. VI, p. 461. August, 1873.

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118. The poetical works of Edmund Clarence Stedman. Complete edition. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1873. 12mo., cloth, pp. xii, 342.
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119. Cameos. Selected from the works of Walter Savage Landor by Edmund C. Stedman and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. With an Introduction by Edmund C. Stedman. pp. 12. Boston: James R. Osgood & Company, 1873. 24mo., cloth, pp. 128.

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121. A representative triad. Hood-Arnold-Procter. [Essay.] *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. VII, pp. 463–478. February, 1874.

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122. The Lord's-day gale. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXIII, No. 198, p. 402. April, 1874.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 11.

The same. *Songs and Ballads*, 1884. p. 87.

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124. Charles Dudley Warner. [Article.] *Appletons' Journal*, New York, Vol. XI, No. 275, pp. 801–804. June 27, 1874.

125. Whitelaw Reid. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. VIII, pp. 444–451. August, 1874.

126. Miss Field's début. [Letter.] 2 cols. *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 18, 1874.

127. Robert Browning. [Essay.] *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. IX, pp. 167–183. December, 1874.

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1875

128. Song from a drama. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. IX, p. 329. January, 1875.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 86.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 101.

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The same [under new title]. I love thee. Set to music by Dudley Buck. Opus 79. New York: G. Schirmer.

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130. The skull in the gold-drift. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXV, No. 208, p. 200. February, 1875.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 64.

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131. LATTER-DAY BRITISH POETS. PART II. Algernon Charles Swinburne. [Essay.] *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. IX, No. 5, pp. 585-596. March, 1875.

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136. THE COMEDIAN'S LAST NIGHT. *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 18, 1875.

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The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 184.

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1876

137. Only the sunny hours [suggested by an inscription on a sun dial]. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. XI, p. 384. January, 1876.

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138. Walt Whitman's clerkship. [Letter.] *New-York Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1876.

139. Custer. *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 13, 1876.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 70.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 48.

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140. Octavius Brooks Frothingham. [A sketch.] *The Galaxy*, New York, Vol. XXII, No. 4. pp. 478–488. October, 1876.

The same [under new title]. Octavius Brooks Frothingham and the new faith. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1876. 16mo., cloth, pp. 50.

141. Clara Morris. *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 21, 1876.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 93.

142. The monument of Greeley. Poem delivered at the unveiling of the printers' monument to Horace Greeley, Greenwood Cemetery, December 4, 1876.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 55.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1884. p. 329.

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143. Sister Beatrice. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXIX, No. 231, p. 69. January, 1877.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 31

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144. Treasure-tombs at Mykenæ. [Essay on Schliemann's discoveries.] 4 cols. *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1877.

145. News from Olympia. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXIX, No. 232, p. 159. February, 1877.

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146. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. [Biographical and critical sketch. "Only critical so far as it touches on the *quality* of Longfellow's verse. *E. C. S.*"] 3 cols. p. 23. *The Library Table*, New York, March, 1877.

147. Creole lover's song. [Music by Dudley Buck.] *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXIX, No. 234, p. 492. April, 1877.

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The same. Westerly: George B. Champlin, 1886. 16mo., paper, pp. 6.

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148. Seeking the may-flower. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XXXIX, No. 235, p. 582. May, 1877.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 46.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 9.

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149. The discoverer. *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 1, 1877.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877, p. 26.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 187.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1884, p. 380.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 463.

150. Hawthorne. Poem read before the Society of the Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard University, Cambridge, June 28, 1877.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 9.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879, p. 71

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151. Madrigal. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. XIV, p. 546. August, 1877.

The same. *Hawthorne, and other Poems*, 1877. p. 90.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 98.

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The same. Modern Classics. Illustrated. [With Charles Kingsley's and Owen Meredith's "Favorite Poems."] Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1881. 32mo., cloth, pp. 98.

153. Hawthorne and other poems. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1877. 16mo., cloth, pp. viii, 134.

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155. The last token [Rome a. d. 107]. [Poem.] *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. XV, p. 353. January, 1878.

156. Jamaica. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XLI, No. 244, p. 163. February, 1878.

The same. *Poems Now First Collected*, 1897. p. 162.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 337.

157. The rose and the jasmine. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XLI, No. 246, p. 435. April, 1878.

The same. *Poems Now First Collected*, 1897. p. 169.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 340.

158. William Cullen Bryant, review of his literary character and services. *The Evening Post*, New York, June 13, 1878. [This article was the original form of the chapter on Bryant in *Poets of America*, 1885.]

159. Christian and Christiana. Poem read at the Golden Wedding of Honorable William E. Dodge, June 24, 1878.

The same. *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1878.

160. Meridian. An old-fashioned poem. Read at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Yale Class of 1853. June 28, 1878.

The same. *Poetical Works*, 1884. p. 338.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 136.

161. Song. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XLII, No. 249, p. 106. July, 1878.

The same [under new title]. The wedding-day. *Songs and Ballads*, 1884. p. 10.

The same. *Poems Now First Collected*, 1897. p. 70.

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The same. Set to music by Jaques Mendelsohn. Boston: G. D. Russell & Company.

162. THE SILENT WORLD IS SLEEPING. Set to music by Dudley Buck. Opus 79. New York: G. Schirmer. 1878.

The same [without music, under new title]. NOCTURNE. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 100.

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The same. *Poems Now First Collected*, 1897. p. 8.

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163. TO THE POET. Five songs. Opus 79. Poetry by Edmund C. Stedman. Music by Dudley Buck. New York: G. Schirmer, 1878. 1. Thou art Mine! 2. Shadow-Land. 3. I Love Thee! 4. The Silent World is Sleeping. 5. Creole Lover's Song.

164. THE DEATH OF BRYANT. Poem delivered at the Bryant memorial meeting at the Century Club, November 12, 1878.

The same. *The Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Vol. XLII, No. 254, p. 747. December, 1878.

The same. *Lyrics and Idylls, with other Poems*, 1879. p. 83.

The same. *Poems Now First Collected*, 1897. p. 97.

The same. *Complete Poems*, 1908. p. 194.

1879

165. ADDRESS. [Before the Bayard Taylor memorial meeting of the Goethe Club. January 29, 1879.]

The same [extract]. *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 30, 1879.

166. AERIAL NAVIGATION. [Article.] Illustrated. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. XVII, pp. 566–581. February, 1879. [See title Nos. 197, 363.]

167. MUSÆ AMERICANÆ. [Interview with a distinguished lady.] Poem read at the dinner given by the *Papyrus Club*, Boston, February 15, 1879, in honor of many well-known American women of song and letters.

The same. *The Independent*, New York, Vol. XXXI, p. 1. March 6, 1879.

168. BAYARD TAYLOR: HIS POETRY AND LITERARY CAREER. pp. 20. [See also frontispiece.] II parts. *Scribner's Monthly*, New York, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1, 2, pp. 81–89 and pp. 266–276. November, December, 1879.

The same [revised, under new title]. BAYARD TAYLOR. *Poets of America*, 1885. Chapter XI, pp. 396–434.

169. LE JOUR DU ROSSIGNOL. Fable in verse read at the Holmes Breakfast, Boston, December 3, 1879.

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